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## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE





# THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

*by*

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*Dedicated*

TO THE MEMORY OF  
DOCTOR THOMAS WALTON GALLOWAY  
MY BELOVED PIONEER CO-WORKER  
TO WHOSE CREATIVE GENIUS AND DEVOTED SERVICE  
THE CAUSE OF FAMILY RELATIONS  
IS DEEPLY INDEBTED



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## **THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE**





## FOREWORD

**T**HIS is not intended to be just another book on marriage. A number of books dealing with the sex aspect of marriage have appeared within the past two years and some of these we have welcomed because there had existed a distressing dearth of books on the subject which could be recommended to those who need them. However, to one who has specialized in this field for many years and has reason to be close to the public's need in this branch of literature, most of these books have been disappointing. At one extreme are those the subject matter of which is sensible so far as it goes but which over-simplify the problems involved and are not sufficiently informative. At the other extreme are books which are useful for the professional or special student but are too diffuse and technical for the lay reader. In this book the writer has sought to strike a mean between these extremes. He has sought in brief compass to give an insight into the factors that make for successful marriage, with particular emphasis upon the sex relationship, and the

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factors which so largely contribute to maladjustments and failures. He has endeavored to bring an understanding of the essential differences in the sexual constitutions of the man and the woman, of the adjustment problems which arise out of these differences and especially out of ignorance of them. He has also taken advantage of the opportunity to bring to the public in a popular book some of the pertinent and illuminating data available in the important research studies made in recent years.

The author is keenly conscious of the danger of so frank a portrayal of the character and extent of the problems and maladjustments that prevail among the married—the danger of discouraging marriage, whereas the author's purpose is to make vivid the appeal of marriage at its best. He believes, however, that nothing is to be gained by ignoring, hiding or minimizing the facts. If we are to steer clear of shoals we need to know that they lie in our course and what their location and character is. Our emphasis throughout the book is intended to be not so much upon the formidable character of the adverse factors, but upon the fact that in the main *they are preventable and remediable*. The purpose of the book is to provide as

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clear as possible a sailing chart to enable those who are contemplating marriage to avoid the shoals, and to help those who find themselves already among them to discover a way out.

This is, however, not our only objective. It is not enough to avoid the rocks. An "adjusted" marriage may yet, and often does, move on low, mediocre levels, and such marriage does not bring the great fulfillment. The author has sought to point the way toward marriage at its best, which makes it the great, thrilling, creative adventure which is the hope and dream of every normal youth.

In order to forestall a pessimistic impression, it is well at the outset to take a glimpse at the favorable aspects of marriage derived from the very research studies which portray so clearly the unfavorable situations that prevail.

Dr. Katharine B. Davis in her study *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* asked the question, "Is your married life a happy one?" Of the 988 of 1,000 married women who answered the question, 872 answered unequivocally in the affirmative. One hundred and sixteen were either partially or totally unhappy. Since no standard

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of happiness had been defined it is obviously true that the answers embrace a wide range of individual standards. It is, however, strikingly significant that in the face of the adverse conditions which are found in so large a proportion of these marriages, such an overwhelming majority of the women rated their marriage as happy.

Dr. G. V. Hamilton in *A Research in Marriage* which is the record of a study of one hundred married men and one hundred married women, asked the question, "Do you wish to go on living with (your spouse) because you love him (or her)?"

78 men and 75 women answered "Yes" or "That is the only reason."

11 men and 16 women answered "No."

1 man and 6 women answered "I don't know."

10 men and 3 women answered inconclusively.

A second question was, "If by some miracle you could press a button and find that you had never been married to your husband (or wife) would you press that button?" This question was answered as follows:

"No" 74 men (8 qualified) and 72 women (8 qualified).

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"Yes" 18 men (3 qualified) and 14 women (2 qualified).

3 men and 2 women answered inconclusively.

A third question was, "Knowing what you now know, would you wish to marry if you were unmarried?" The very significant answers are:

"Yes," 82 men (5 qualified) and 84 women (10 qualified).

Uncertain, 4 men and 2 women.

"No," 11 men (4 qualified) and 8 women (2 qualified).

3 men and 6 women answered inconclusively.

These data are impressive testimony in favor of marriage. How significant they are can be fully appreciated only when the full story told in these researches has been studied. If in spite of the prevalence of the factors and conditions which tend toward limitation and frustration of marital satisfaction and happiness, so strikingly favorable testimony for marriage can be given by those who have faced and battled with these disruptive elements, a great light of hope is shed upon the marriage scene when we consider that these adverse factors are not inherent in marriage,

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but their existence is for the most part unnecessary and inexcusable. They may be prevented and remedied. With the prevention and the remedy and with the encouragement of a more creative marriage ideal and achievement this book is chiefly concerned.

The book is addressed primarily to the men and women who are approaching marriageable age and to those in marriage who are experiencing difficulties to happy adjustment. One of the chief incentives to the preparation of the book has been the extensive and persistent demand by physicians, clergymen and others placed in positions of responsibility for advising young married people and those contemplating marriage, for a scientific, non-technical, straightforward statement which may be put into the hands of persons needing advice. It is hoped also that the book may be useful to teachers in schools and colleges who are concerned with education for marriage and family life, and with personal counsel of youth, as at least an introductory survey preparatory to approaching the more ponderous and technical publications.

Appreciative acknowledgment is given of the illuminating and enriching material drawn from the studies of Dr. G. V. Hamilton, Dr. Katharine B. Davis, and

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Dr. Robert L. Dickinson and his co-author, Miss Lura Beam, and also the valuable material derived from the writings of Havelock Ellis, Knight Dunlap, Frederick Harris and others who have been quoted. The author has drawn freely upon these studies without encumbering the text with excessive specific quotations and detailed text references.

It may be objected that the research studies referred to deal with selected groups which do not fairly represent the rank and file of normal society. We do not, and the authors of these studies do not, claim that they do. Dr. Davis' thousand married women who answered the questionnaire are a select group in the sense that they happen to represent mainly women of higher education and tradition. Dr. Hamilton's group of two hundred is self-selected in the sense that they volunteered to coöperate in the study by way of giving their sex histories, and may be weighted with the maladjusted. It is to be noted, however, that the group as a whole is remarkably content with marriage. Dr. Dickinson's data are derived from women who constitute a selected group in that they are women who at some time in married life came to the gynecologist—most of them for medical reasons other than recog-



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nized sexual maladjustments. For the limited purpose of our reference we believe the data are not invalidated. It has been our purpose merely to indicate in general the character and prevalence of problems and difficulties found among such studies of the married; and particularly to point out the fact that these are largely preventable.

The excellent drawings of the sexual mechanisms were prepared by Dr. Dickinson and his co-workers. They are drawn to scale based upon an exhaustive study of actual measurements including his own extensive original source material.

THE AUTHOR

## INTRODUCTION

**I**N stressing sexual satisfaction and harmony as basic in enduringly happy marriage we are not to be understood to imply that the sexual life is all of marriage or even the source of the largest satisfactions. There are unlimited areas in the mutual life of husband and wife that are non-sexual which, when shared, contribute in incalculable measure to their companionship and personal growth. So keen and absorbing at times are the interests and satisfactions of a well-mated pair in these non-sexual areas of their relationship that frequently, and perhaps for long periods, passionate sexual activity plays a quite subordinate rôle. We must not, however, minimize the fact that the basic marriage bond is sex attraction, the sex urge; and this being an inborn drive, its normal satisfaction becomes in most cases *a condition* for sustained harmony and mutual satisfaction in all the other areas of the marital relationship. Frustration or maladjustment in the sexual sphere seriously jeopardizes the attaining of a vital, creative companionship. Only in that sense is the

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sexual life basic in marriage. Harmony and mutual satisfaction in the sexual sphere is likely to be the sustaining vital breath of the marriage as a whole.

Dr. Robert L. Dickinson, in his analysis of *A Thousand Marriages*,<sup>1</sup> says, "Coitus is an index to marriage. If the data in this study reinforce any one concept it is that satisfactory sexual relations are necessary to fully adjusted and successful union." And again, "The destruction of periods of sexual expression before they come to full development"—which is a common experience of women, as his and other studies so clearly reveal—"diverts the sexual cycle into solitude and opposition. In states of opposition, excitement exists but it is against the partner, not with him. . . . Erotic excitement withdrawn from the husband goes to frigidity, dyspareunia (painful coitus), maladjustment, separation, and elsewhere." Dr. G. V. Hamilton in his summary of *A Research in Marriage*, says, "Unless the sex act ends in a fully releasing, fully terminating climax in at least 20 per cent of copulations there is likely to be trouble ahead. The least serious consequence is a chronic sense of tense, restless unsatisfaction."

<sup>1</sup> *A Thousand Marriages*, Robert Laton Dickinson and Lura Beam.

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A few references will suffice to emphasize the pervasive influence of the sex factor in marriage and to indicate the extent and seriousness of its frustration.

In the study of Katharine B. Davis, 111 of the definitely unhappy group of married women gave twenty-three reasons for their unhappiness. The first three of these reasons, which embrace 77 per cent of the replies, are as follows:

	WOMEN
Incompatibility of temperament or interests	40
Difficulties of adjustment of sexual life	23
Economic reasons	14

Of the group in this study which considered their marriage to be reasonably happy, 60 per cent found their marriage relations pleasurable throughout their entire married life. Of the unhappy group this was true of only 15 per cent.

In Hamilton's study, thirty-nine of the one hundred men, and forty-five of the one hundred women, name sexual maladjustment as the most unsatisfactory item in their marriage. The meaning and force of these facts can be more fully appreciated when we note that while fifty-four of the one hundred women were rated as relatively normal as to orgasm capacity

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in the sex act, the other forty-six women (a) have never had the orgasm, (b) are doubtful if they ever had it, (c) have had it at most only two or three times in all their lives, (d) have only the multiple, spurious, probably clitoridal, minor climaxes.

In Dickinson's one thousand marriages the plus and minus ratio of sexual adjustment is three to two; that is, two out of every five are sexually maladjusted. Three hundred and twenty-nine of the 415 cases of sexual maladjustment report the nature of the wife's attitude toward coitus as follows:

Positive (agreeable feeling and pleasant after results)	49
Indifferent	105
Verging toward distaste	29
Negative (dread, hatred, disgust, etc.)	146

Since "indifference" really means going toward the negative side in reality, of these 329 maladjusted wives, forty-nine are positive in their reaction in coitus and 280 must be rated as negative or inclined toward the negative.

The belief has been and still is widespread among men that women do not have sexual needs and capac-

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ities at all comparable to those of men. If the inequalities in the sexual experience of mates revealed in the data cited could be explained on that ground, the situation would be far less serious. But this is a fundamental error. It is well known that while sexuality in women manifests itself differently than it does in men, women's sexual needs and capacities are wholly comparable to those of men. Indeed, full climactic experience for women in marriage is even more important to their happiness and their physical, mental and emotional health than it is for men, because sex is more intimately tied up with the whole emotional life of woman and irradiates more fully her whole personality.

No, the prevailing satisfaction inequalities in the sex experience of mates in marriage are not to be accounted for on the ground of inherent inadequacy of sexual capacity in women. While more extensive research is needed for an understanding of all the factors and their relations which enter into this complex problem, all trustworthy studies point to the fact that in the main these marital inequalities arise out of (a) cultural influences between infancy and maturity resulting in negation, (b) ignorance, and (c) crude, bun-

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gling lover's technique. Havelock Ellis voices the same truth when he says, "The largest part of the troubles of marriage and of the perils of sex is due merely to ignorance and superstition." The hopeful thing is that the maladjustments which prevail are for the most part avoidable.

For successfully adjusted and abidingly happy marriage a positive, objective, wholesome attitude toward sex in general and the human sexual relationship in particular is first of all necessary. It is in this regard that our scheme of education and training fails the young most seriously; it is in this respect that it does youth the most serious damage. All too often the home and the parents unwittingly become the child's worst enemies. The mental and emotional patterns together with ingrained cultural taboos, formed in the prevailing atmosphere of many homes and in the general social environment, tend to condition childhood and youth to sex negation. As Dickinson puts it, "The data seem to suggest that negation is brought ready-made to marriage and that acquiescence is a second stage." A wide, yawning, often terrifying gulf has been fixed between love and sex. The one is pure, noble, thrilling; the other is low, animal, ugly. So in the act of

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life's rarest intimacy this same gulf often keeps lovers poles apart. Progressively this chasm comes to intervene in the other areas of life too, and in time, and often soon, two strangers are living together in the same house with their children, while their longings and interests stray to more alluring fields.

For successful marriage clear knowledge is needed: knowledge of the physiological and psychological factors involved; knowledge of the differences between the sexual constitutions of men and of women and the adjustment problems which arise out of these differences; knowledge of the art of loving which gives the most promise of accomplishing a happy adjustment. But all too often the best knowledge proves impotent in the face of an inhibiting, paralysing attitude toward the sexual aspect of the love-life, such as is still so commonly the social heritage of people today. Having grown up in a social atmosphere which gives to sex an ugly mien, it is not to be wondered that the shocking incidents and experiences in relation to matters of sex, which come to most in childhood or youth, often leave psychic twists and inhibitions of serious nature. We have only well begun to understand their import and consequences. In marriage, like ghostly hands



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reaching up out of a dead past, they choke and frustrate the normal capacities and powers of sexual love.

In some cases these inhibiting mental kinks are so deep-seated and stubborn as to require the aid of the psychiatrist to resolve them. For many, fortunately, these barriers can be removed by way of a new, intelligent, objective view of the matter, one which sees, appreciates, and accepts sex as a normal, wholesome life force which constitutes the dynamic factor in human love and which has potentialities for supreme happiness and creative power. One viewing a great cathedral in the murky fogs of night is likely to be repelled by the vague vision of gloomy portals, dark uncertain columns and ghostly figures. Viewed in the sunlight against a blue sky, it fills the beholder with reverent wonder and admiration. So the clear light of day needs to be shed upon human sex expression in order that it may be evaluated in true terms and its life-enriching powers appreciated and appropriated.

CHAPTER I  
*SEX IN LIFE*



## CHAPTER I

### *SEX IN LIFE*

**I**N this chapter we shall attempt to sketch the nature and significance of sex and the rôle it plays in human life, in the hope that it may aid some toward that scientific, liberating attitude which is first of all necessary to successful adjustment in marriage.

Sex is an organic phenomenon apparently with a definite chemical base, discoverable in practically all organisms, plant and animal. Everything seems to point to the idea that it is, in spite of the variety of its manifestations, a consistent and homologous function throughout. Strictly speaking it is as varied as, and no more definable than, life itself.

Nature seems to have experimented for untold ages with a method of perpetuating life which involved only the single organism. The single cell, which constituted this early form of life, merely divided into two new ones. There was but one parent. There was no sex. This method of reproduction did not seem suited to the progressive development of variety in forms of life. In time nature arrived at a method of reproduction which required the union of two differ-

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ent cells which we have come to designate as male and female. Since this method provided for a wider combination of hereditary qualities, it offered greater evolutionary promise.

Sex is at its simplest in those essentially unicellular organisms in which there is no sharp distinction between parent and gamete, between germ-plasm and soma (body). In many of these there exists a temporary or permanent attraction between two individuals of a given species. The attraction is primarily of a chemical nature, and arises ordinarily from a definite and often measurable difference in the individuals themselves. The attraction leads to a temporary or permanent union of the substances of these individuals.

Practically then, the biologic elements in sex, reduced to their lowest terms, are: (1) An *adaptive difference* between two types of individuals of a species, of such a nature as to result in (2) A profound *attraction* between the individuals, which in turn results in (3) A *union* of these individuals. The union (conjugation) is biologically the essence of the function. The unlikeness serves at least a main cause of the union, and the attraction furnishes the method by which it is brought about. The terms *male* and *fe-*

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*male* are used to express the two types of uniting cells.

Sex seems more obscure, as it certainly is more complicated, in the multicellular plants and animals, in which there are two contrasted cycles of cellular history. In one group of these cells, the history is a relatively simple one. There is a series of divisions, resulting finally in two types of cells comparable in all essential appearance, capacities, and behavior to the single-celled organisms already mentioned. These are the familiar dimorphic individuals, known as gametes (ova and sperm), possessing the power of union (fertilization or conjugation). These contain the germ-plasm, that fundamental substance which is potentially immortal and provides the continuing physical and chemical medium by means of which the characteristics and the very existence of the species are continued.

In the other group of cells a high degree of differentiation accompanies the cell divisions, and complex bodies are developed, whose primary organic function seems to be to preserve and to make more sure the functions of the gametes. In the evolution of organisms, the germ cells must be looked upon as primary, and the soma or body (i.e., the parent) as

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derived, in all these essential adaptations, particularly in those related to the continuance of the species.

In spite of the fact that the bodily differences between males and females among men and other complex animals are secondary to sexual differences in the germ cells, both in their general evolution and in their individual development, it remains true that these derived differences of parental bodies are what we usually have in mind when we use the term sex. What then are the chief elements in the sex of "parents"—i.e., in the bodies which carry the sexed germ cells? These vary greatly. In the least differentiated condition of "maleness" and "femaleness" in parents, the bodies are alike, each having two types of organs, from one of which male gametes (sperms) are freed, and from the other female gametes (eggs). Such parents are known as hermaphrodites. They are alike: but they have the essentials of sex none the less. These parents attract mutually and mate in such ways as to bring the sperm of one or both individuals into the neighborhood of the eggs, and into a position where the differences and attractions of the gametes may result in their union.

In strictly dimorphic (two-formed) sexual parents,

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on the contrary, each carries and cares for only one type of gametes—male (sperms), or female (eggs). Here again the parental differences result in attractions between themselves, and in some more or less intimate type of mating of parents by which the more fundamental union of the gametes is made probable. It is thus to be observed that sex in the multicellular bodies or parents involves essentially, as in the gametes, *differences*, *attraction*, and *mating*—the last a temporary contact which we call a union. Biologically the essential, permanent union is that of the gametes. The temporary union of the parents is but a means of assuring that end.

The differences of male and female parents in their extreme form, comprise: the differences in the testes, ovaries and the internal secretions arising from them; in the organs of copulation by which the sperms are brought into the range of attraction of the eggs; in many items of bodily form and function—as size, shape, color, odor, voice, and numerous special organs for recognition, attack, attraction, clasping, etc.; and finally in instincts, impulses, appetites, and emotions which help insure mating, and in the satisfactions which accompany it.



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The attractions between parents, which lead to union, initially involve largely chemical and physical senses analogous at least to the senses of touch and smell; but in the higher animals they involve the additional senses of sight and hearing—making use of the differences mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

In other words there is a great augmentation and enrichment of the differences and the attractions between the somatic sexes (the parents) as compared with those of the male and female gametes. Similarly the satisfactions resulting from mating of parents are, without question, more complex and keen than can be true in the union of the gametes. For these reasons somatic sex gives rise to much more in the way of emotional and aesthetic states, and to inner desires and urges which may exist independent of external stimulation. Increasingly the term "sex" has come to be applied to these body differences, attractions, behavior and satisfactions.

What has all this to do with the meaning of sex in human beings? In the persistence of a species reproduction is a basic, organic necessity, as much so as the development of individual life. Sex—whether of difference, attraction, union, or satisfaction—is uni-

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versally essential neither to individual conservation nor to reproduction. Sex is, however, an *aid* to more effective reproduction and development. Its primary biological value is not that it is the basis of attraction between mates, nor that it furnishes them incitements, satisfactions and ecstasies; but that it supplements and perfects the development of new individuals of a new generation among human beings.

We have seen now that in nature the primary biologic function of sexual union is the continuance of the species. The keen pleasure premium associated with it arose as a by-product, as it were. But sometimes in nature, as in commerce, by-products become of equal or greater importance than the primary product. With the progress of psychic growth the elemental sex attractions have become increasingly elaborated and refined, until in the reasoning human being—contrasted to the instinct-driven animal—with his higher form of consciousness, gifted with memory and imagination, it has come to permeate and actuate the entire personality and to serve not only physical but also spiritual ends. Without meaning to attribute personality and purpose to nature we may say that she has never been the scientist alone but the

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supreme artist as well, evolving spiritual gifts out of crude physical beginnings and exquisite beauty out of rough, raw materials. So out of this primitive physical attraction between male and female, serving primarily biologic ends, there has been woven strand by strand the marvellous pattern of human sympathy, affection and love which so greatly enriches the life of man and which underlies the structure of our social life. The mating instinct in man and woman to-day serves not merely to assure the continuance of life but also to assure the healthy, harmonious functioning of the whole personality and to fulfill love. It may not be too much to say that while biologically procreation remains the primary function of sex in human life, psychologically its primary function has come to be to vivify, enrich and develop love. Those who still insist upon animal analogy as a guide for human conduct, holding that sex union is justifiable only for the purpose of procreation, are in fundamental error. They fail to appreciate the great contributions sex has to make to the spiritual life of man. In human beings sex serves the ends of love, *independent of procreation*. As the late Luther Gulick has said, "Sex in human life can be

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rightly interpreted only in terms of the affections.”

A brief analysis of human sex nature, as it now exists, into its main constituent physical and psychic elements, may help us to a sound view of their functions and relations. We have first the biological sex base, the physical core, so to speak. This includes all those basic physical structures and their functions, and the primitive psychic elements necessary for the perpetuation of the species: the physical sex mechanism and its functions and impulses; the hormones (internal secretions) produced by the sex glands; the states of mind which arouse and stimulate passion, such as thought, desire, imagination, etc.; and the primitive attractions between male and female which are *essentially physical and self-centered*. This biologic core of sex met nature's basic need for perpetuating the species. That physical base represents essentially the sex development of man in his primitive savage state before his nature became elaborated into and adorned by the higher psychic and social elements found in human life today.

Let no one blind himself to the fact that this physical base of sex with its driving, self-centered impulses is as definite a reality in life today, both in

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men and in women, as it was in the most primitive savage. Every normal man and woman possesses it—and is possessed by it. It is ingrained in human nature and is a force to be reckoned with. It is as capable of direct, crude, wholly selfish expression in men and women today as at any time in evolutionary history. But let it not for this reason be despised. When, as the basic element in sexual love, it is controlled, humanized and socialized, it becomes the most powerful energizer of life on all levels, and the avenue toward supreme ecstasy and happy human fellowship. It is by way of, and out of, the physical sex base that man's social capacities—his most distinctly human qualities—have grown.

Out of the self-centered physical base of sex there gradually developed the higher psychic, aesthetic and social elements which have so greatly enlarged and enriched human life and made an organized social world possible. Human sympathy in all its wide range of affectional and social expression undoubtedly had its starting point in the first spark of sexual sympathy which arose to assure the mating of parents. From its early beginnings this sympathetic response grew by natural selection. The most sympathetic

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types became the best parents and, therefore, brought the larger proportion of young to maturity and hence survived against the less sympathetic types. It is mainly so that love in the world has grown. It has had survival value. From that first appearance of sexual sympathy grew the two main strands of affection: conjugal sympathy and parental sympathy. These two strands united to form the basis of the family. The sympathetic and social qualities and relationships developed in the family gradually extended beyond the family in turn to the nearest of kin, the clan, the tribe, the state, the nation. They underlie our entire social structure.

In this social zone of sex are found the higher *affectional attractions* between male and female—as contrasted to the self-centered physical attractions—including appreciation, companionship, sympathy, love, devotion, protection, service, sacrifice, chivalry, honor, etc. These qualities are psychic and social. They are the other-seeking, other-serving qualities which find their fullest satisfaction in the happiness and service of others.

In this emotional, social zone of sex we have also that group of elements which belong to parenthood

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but which are closely connected with sex attraction—fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, sisterhood, the affectional relations between parent and child, and the home with all its wealth of tender and social impulses. Galloway sketched tersely the social significance of sex when he said,<sup>1</sup> “Just to illustrate what a wonderful and vital influence sex has in life one needs only to remember that all that is meant by the following words grows out of sex and its results: manliness, womanliness, love, courtship, marriage, home, father, mother, family life, parental care and education, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, filial devotion, brotherhood. These facts, ideas and relations—and the human adjustments and virtues that have grown up in connection with them—could not have existed but for that which we call sex. They are the normal and natural fruits of sex and reproduction. . . . Undertake to remove from our lives and minds the ideas and facts for which these words stand, and nothing worth while would be left in human civilization, history, literature, poetry or happiness.”

Beyond this social zone of sex lies the large area of life which is not itself sexual, embracing a wide

<sup>1</sup> *The Biology of Sex*, Thomas W. Galloway.

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range of human interests and activities, but which is, nevertheless, profoundly influenced by the sexual sphere of life. The sex motif runs like a golden thread through the entire woof of the pattern of life.

In the measure that the sympathetic, social sex qualities have progressively developed in life, sex expression has increasingly been given psychic value and meaning. On the physical level sex expression tends to be short-circuited between desire and satisfaction. It takes the most direct route, on a physical plane, like an electric current between two poles. With the growth of the social elements, sex expression has come increasingly to be long-circuited through the whole human range of psychic, aesthetic, affectional and social values and responses. It has become increasingly refined, socialized, spiritualized. As Herbert says, "Man has woven a beautiful pattern of love relationship where there was at first a mere rough outline; he has invented many finer shades of color where there was previously one strong glaring red of lust."

Let it not be thought that in this elaboration of the sex nature of man in the psychic and social areas of his being it has lost in keenness of satisfaction. On the contrary, its satisfactions have thereby become vastly



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enhanced both in range and vividness. The psychic stimulations of love-play, for example, awaken and release the physical responses to the full, and these in turn vivify the psychic areas of the affectional life.

Many married couples, particularly the wives, have a vague feeling or the fixed conviction that in an ideal marriage relationship passion must be excluded or at least rigidly minimized. The repressions and distortions of sexuality which grow out of such attitudes fill the graveyard of marital hopes and happiness. What has already been said should serve to dispel such erroneous conceptions.

Dickinson says, "Passion is the critical stuff of which the fabric of marriage is made"; and Havelock Ellis <sup>1</sup> exclaims, "It is passion, more passion and fuller that we need." He says further, "While it is perfectly true that sexual energy may be in large degree arrested and transformed into intellectual and moral forms, yet it is also true that pleasure itself, and above all sexual pleasure, wisely used and not abused, may prove the stimulus and liberator of our finest and most exalted activities. It is largely this remarkable function of sex pleasure which is decisive

<sup>1</sup> *Little Essays of Love and Virtue.*

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in settling the argument of those who claim that continence is the only alternative to the animal end of marriage. That argument ignores the liberating and harmonizing influences, giving wholesome balance and sanity to the whole organism, imparted by a sexual union which is the outcome of the psychic as well as physical needs.

“There is also the effect on the union itself. For through harmonious sex relationships a deeper spiritual unity is reached than can possibly be derived from continence in or out of marriage, and the marriage association becomes an apter instrument in the service of the world. Apart from any sexual craving, the complete spiritual contact of two persons who love each other can only be attained through some act of rare intimacy. No act can be quite so intimate as the sexual embrace. In its accomplishment, for all who have reached a reasonable human degree of development, the communion of bodies becomes the communion of souls. The outward and visible sign has been the consummation of an inward spiritual grace.”

Frederick Harris<sup>1</sup> goes to the heart of the matter when he says, “This sexual experience is a sensuous

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Marriage.*

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experience. Like all sensuous experiences, it will have for the married couple the meaning that they put into it. The physical expressions are gracious and inspiring according to the degree in which they express a worthy and unselfish love. But they are more than a mere expression; they become an actual part of love. Born of love, they in turn create love. The act of sexual intercourse, at the roots of which is physiological tension, is taken up by the partners and transmitted into a perfect experience of love. It becomes a precious possession. All this is profoundly true of the whole sexual experience from the touch of the hand to the climax of sexual intercourse."

The measure of the spiritual values of the sex relationship is exactly the measure in which physical passion is given psychic meaning. In an ideal sex relationship we do not set apart or in opposition the physical and psychic components as if they were antagonistic to one another. They become fused in the total experience of love. The physical and the emotional in sexual love at its best all become spiritual together, and irradiate and energize the total life of the partners. The loftiest peaks in the love relationships of mates are not to be reached by those

## SEX IN LIFE

who have minimum capacity for passion, or by those who most completely repress it. They are to be reached rather by those who possess great capacity for passion equally balanced by the psychic component of human sexuality. It is the psychic content that gives spiritual meaning to passion.

Let not those approaching marriage fear or shrink from the stirrings of erotic forces in themselves or their chosen mates. Let them rather hail these manifestations with pride and joy as the signs of normal being and a foundation upon which to build an ideal marriage. Let them understand that the achieving of that personal relationship and companionship which constitutes genuine marriage does not call for despising and repressing passionate powers but, to the contrary, for a full mutual release and harmonious adjustment of these powers in the service of their love and well-being. To be sure, marriages are not infrequently wrecked by excessive expression of passion on the part of one or the other of the mates. More often, however, is the estrangement caused by the failure of passion, a failure of passion to match passion in full and free experience of mutual affection. The tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

in most such cases the failure springs not from the want of inherent sexual capacity, but comes rather as a result of negative cultural compulsions, ignorance and bungling methods. For abidingly happy companionship in marriage, mates, and especially women, must rid themselves of any notion that any one of the elements which constitute love is ignoble. Only when its full capacities are released, developed and harmonized in the life of the married can love contribute most richly to personal development, abiding happiness and creative power. Like every human gift sexual passion has capacity for good or for ill. On the purely physical level it may carry man to the lowest levels of degradation. As an integral constituent of love it makes for healthy personality; it yields supreme ecstasy; it feeds the soul; and it spurs life to creative endeavor. This realization is the task and the privilege of lovers in marriage. This harnessing of passion to the service of love and of life is fundamental. If this area of the marriage relationship can be fully and richly shared, a growing companionship and a glad, full sharing in all of its wide areas is reasonably assured. With failure of sexual harmony, the marriage structure rests on shifting sands.

## CHAPTER II

### *THE SEX MECHANISM*



## CHAPTER II

### THE SEX MECHANISM

#### *The Male Organs*<sup>1</sup>

THE two testes or testicles hang side by side in a sac called the scrotum, behind the penis in its relaxed state. The testicle is oval or egg-shaped and is about one and one-half inches long and one inch or more wide. The testes have two different functions. The greater mass of each is made up of a series of lobes which are composed of minute tubules in which the sperm cells (spermatozoa) are formed and liberated. The tissue between the lobes (interstitial tissue) produces that marvellous chemical product, the internal secretion or sex hormone, which creates the sex impulse, causes the essential male characteristics in the individual, and plays its part with the other internal secretion glands in the body in sustaining the normal functioning of the body. If this function of the testes is destroyed before puberty, the development of the individual becomes profoundly altered in form, temperament and impulses. The internal secretion

<sup>1</sup> See figures 1 and 2, pp. 69 and 70.



## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

is so called because it is absorbed directly into the blood. It is wholly distinct from the products which go to make up the seminal discharge (semen). The internal secretion is never discharged from the body in ejaculation of semen.

The male sperms formed in the testes are the vital, active elements in the seminal discharge. The spermatozoön has the power of fertilizing the egg of the woman and thus starting the development of a new human being. The spermatozoön is a highly vitalized cell consisting of a head, neck and long tail. The head contains the nucleus by which are transmitted the hereditary characteristics of the individual. The sperm cell has the power of independent motion, propelling itself in the liquid secretions in which it floats, by a sweeping, twisting motion of its tail approximately at the rate of its own length per second. The spermatozoön is, however, so minute, being visible only by the aid of the microscope, that its progress in relation to gross anatomical structure is comparatively slow. After the semen has been discharged about the mouth of the uterus, in coitus, it requires an hour or more for the spermatozoa to reach the

## THE SEX MECHANISM

cavity of the uterus, and some hours to reach the oviduct or tube where they may meet the ovum (egg).

If an egg has been released and is encountered, one spermatozoön, and only one, of the 200 million to 500 million discharged in a single orgasm by the male, penetrates the cell wall of the egg, leaves its tail behind, and merges with the substance of the egg in a complex series of rearrangements of the elements of both cells, which we call *fertilization*. Of the myriad of sperm cells which have lost out against the victor in their race for union with the egg, nearly all flow out of the vagina with the liquid secretion in which they have been ejaculated; the remaining ones disintegrate and are cast out along with the other residues of physiological processes. The spermatozoa are being slowly formed and released in the testicle all the time. As they accumulate they are passed along the tube through fluid pressure and muscular action.

Each of the clusters of convoluted tubules in the lobes of the testes in which the sperm cells are formed merges into a single tube; the resulting mass

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

of tubes in turn form a complex network which constitutes a large annex to the body of the testicle. It is called the *epididymis*. The network of tubes of the epididymis unite in turn to form the seminal duct or *vas deferens*. (See figure 1, p. 69.) From the epididymis each seminal duct passes upward in the scrotal sac and enters the pelvic cavity where it continues its upward course, then curves forward and downward to enter the urethra which conducts the urine from the bladder.

Along the course of the channel from the testicle to the end of the penis, made up of the seminal duct and the urethra, a number of tributaries are received from the accessory sex glands. The first in order is the duct from the *seminal vesicle*. (There are two vesicles, one on each side.) Lower down, before the canal enters the penis, the two seminal ducts from the corresponding testicles join, and at this juncture the duct from the urinary bladder enters. At this point, at the neck of the bladder, is found also the *prostate gland*, the numerous ducts of which enter the urethra. The last contributory ducts to join the canal are those of *Cowper's glands*, two bodies about

## THE SEX MECHANISM

the size of small peas. Numerous glands which secrete mucus are found in the urethra.

The *seminal vesicles* are two oval glandular sacs which lie between the rectum and the bladder. They secrete an albuminous fluid which goes to form the largest portion of the fluid part of the semen. The salts which the secretion contains serve to stimulate the sperms to action, and its albuminous substances furnish them nourishment. The fluid constitutes the necessary commissary for the vast army of spermatozoa. Since the army may be called into action at any moment, the vesicles are slowly secreting all the time so that the commissary department may not be caught napping. The glandular activity is greatly accelerated by sexual stimulation and excitement. The vesicles seem also to serve as reservoirs for some temporary storage of spermatozoa.

Since the vesicles are slowly forming their secretions all the time, they become filled at varying intervals and distended with their contents. Nature has her own way of emptying full vessels. When the individual is asleep and hence conscious inhibitions and controls are eliminated, the distention sets off re-

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

flexes which bring about an orgasm in which not only the contents of the vesicles but all the seminal products are discharged just as they are in an orgasm in coitus. The phenomenon is usually accompanied by an erotic dream and the pleasurable sex feelings of an orgasm.

It is important to understand that these *nocturnal emissions* or "wet dreams" are a natural, harmless occurrence to be expected in most normal men, particularly between the ages of fourteen and thirty-five. They are nothing to worry about. Untold mental torture and unnecessary expense has been caused to thousands of men through the misrepresentations of quacks who prey upon the ignorance and fear of men in these matters.

Seminal emissions vary greatly in frequency of occurrence between different men and in the same men at different times. Within the normal the frequency may range between one a month to several times a week. A variety of factors—physical, mental and temperamental—enter in to cause the diversity. There is a small proportion of young men who rarely or never experience wet dreams. While the occurrence of emissions is to be regarded as normal, their

## THE SEX MECHANISM

absence does not necessarily denote abnormality. The "overflow" may be in part or wholly taken care of in another way. Possibly some of the contents naturally ooze out into the ducts, aided perhaps by bowel movements, to be carried out with the urine in emptying the bladder.

Sleeping upon the back has a tendency to increase the frequency of emissions in most men, possibly for the reason that in this position the weight of the partly filled or full bladder resting upon the vesicles adds to the irritation which sets off the ejaculatory reflexes.

The *prostate gland*, shaped like a horse chestnut, surrounds the neck of the bladder and the junction of the urinary and spermatic ducts, into which junction the prostate empties its contents through some thirty outlets. The glandular structure is permeated by muscular fibres and covered by a muscular wall. This muscular mechanism squeezes the products of the gland into the urethra during the spasms of a sexual orgasm.

The secretion of the prostate gland, which forms a considerable portion of the seminal discharge, is a thin, milky, alkaline fluid the function of which is

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

similar to the products of the vesicles. The alkalinity serves to protect the spermatozoa against acidity arising from the urine, which acidity is very inimical to the vitality and life of the sperm cells.

The posterior urethra, the prostate gland and the vesicles commonly become the harbingers of gonococci following an attack of gonorrhea. The germs become imbedded in the tissues and this condition may leave the seminal discharge infectious years after outward signs and symptoms have disappeared and the individual thinks himself cured. When these comparatively dormant germs are transferred to the mucous surface of the woman's sex organs in coitus, they flare up into full vitality and cause active disease in the woman. Such infections of innocent women are so frequent, and gonorrhea in the woman has often such serious consequences, that it becomes imperative that no man who has had gonorrhea should marry until he is assured by a competent physician, after careful examination and laboratory tests, that he is non-infectious.

*Cowper's glands* secrete, in response to sexual excitement, a thin, slippery, alkaline fluid which, passing into the urethra preceding ejaculation aids per-

## THE SEX MECHANISM

haps in neutralizing any acidity that may have been left by the passage of urine. This secretion together with that of the urethral glands often emerges from the penis during sexual excitement preliminary to intercourse and thereby helps somewhat to lubricate the organ for vaginal penetration.

It will be seen now that the contents discharged (semen or "seed") during the sexual orgasm represent the combined products of the testicles, seminal vesicles, prostate gland, Cowper's glands and urethral glands, each of these contributions to the semen having its peculiar functions. Through the convulsive action of a complex muscular and nervous mechanism, in response to powerful reflexes beyond control of the will, the various seminal products are mixed and shot out from the penis at the height of the sexual orgasm.

The active production of the male sex hormone (internal secretion) in the testes begins at about the age of fourteen and this is the principal factor in the striking physical, mental, temperamental and emotional developments in the early adolescent years. One result is the appearance of the *external secretion* of the testes, that is, the development and release of



## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

spermatozoa. Some time between the ages of fifteen and seventeen the sperm cells attain capacity for fertilizing the egg.

The duration of sexual potency in men varies greatly. In many it continues into well-advanced old age. Physical and mental vigor are dependent in part upon the stimulus of the sex hormone, and with the gradual diminishing of that stimulus, senescence progresses. Many authorities are now agreed that in relation to the hygiene of advanced years, moderate continuance of sexual activity is advisable.

The *penis*, through which the bladder is emptied and the sperms discharged during intercourse, is from three and one-half to four and one-fourth inches long and from one to one and one-fourth inches in diameter in its normal flaccid state. When erect, the organ measures about one and one-half inches in diameter and five and one-half to six and one-half inches in length along its upper side. The penis is composed in part of spongy tissue which becomes gorged with blood, rendering the organ hard and rigid and causing it to stand out at an angle from the body to conform in general to the normal vaginal angle of the woman in

## THE SEX MECHANISM

coitus. The erection, as this stiffening is called, is necessary in order to accomplish the penetration of the vagina. Erection is brought about through a nervous mechanism which, in response to mechanical or psychic stimulation, causes a rush of blood into the organ and at the same time greatly restricts its outflow, thus causing rigid distention of the penis. The end of the penis (head or glans) presents a corona or rim which is the main area of sexual feeling. Sexual feeling in the man is much more localized than it is in the woman, as will be seen in the description of the female organs. In the flaccid state of the penis the head is partly or wholly covered by a loose layer of skin, in the uncircumcised, called the prepuce or foreskin. This may be retracted for the purpose of cleansing and it becomes retracted naturally after entry in coitus. The mucous surface of the foreskin is supplied with glands which secrete a substance called *smegma* which, when it is not frequently removed by washing, becomes irritating and cheesy in appearance, and fertile soil for the breeding of germs. In reference to sex intercourse, scrupulous cleanliness in this respect is imperative. For her own pro-

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

tection the woman should insist upon cleanly habits in this matter on the part of the man. Daily washing with soap should be the rule.

### *The Female Organs*<sup>1</sup>

The external sex parts of the woman included in the *vulva* are more hidden than those of the man, and their position makes it somewhat more difficult for the woman herself to become thoroughly familiar with their structure. Not a few adolescent girls actually do not know that they possess a vagina. As a basis for harmonious, mutually satisfying sex adjustment in marriage it is of great importance that the essential anatomical structure and the functions of the woman's sex mechanism be understood both by the wife and the husband.

The two visible fleshy folds, covered with hair, are the large or *outer lips* (*labia majora*). When the outer lips are separated, two lesser folds are revealed called the smaller or *inner lips* (*labia minora*), covered with mucous membrane on their inner surface. In some women the inner lips protrude somewhat. The inner

<sup>1</sup> See figures 3 and 4, pp. 71 and 72.

## THE SEX MECHANISM

lips meet at their upper ends and, when separated, are approximately in the form of the wishbone of a hen (see figure 3, p. 71). The inner lips are one of the several areas of sex feeling.

Just above the junction of the inner lips is the *clitoris*, the principal organ of sex feeling. This is roughly represented by the knob of the wishbone, above the junction of the two wings. The clitoris is a miniature penis having erectile tissue, and a head and foreskin similar to the penis of the man. It is covered from above by a hood of skin. The clitoris is supplied with highly sensitive nerves which respond to sexual stimulation. From this, the center of erotic response, sexual feeling radiates to the other areas in the vulva and vagina. When erect, the clitoris is about the size and shape of a pea or small bean.

The mucous membrane about the clitoris, like the penis of the man, is supplied with glands which secrete smegma. Because of the difference in structure, cleanliness in the woman is somewhat more difficult than it is in the man. Avoidance of offensive odors is important because they tend to inhibit sexual desire in the man.

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

About one inch below the clitoris is the small opening of the urethra, the duct which conducts the urine from the bladder. The urethra has only the urinary function and no sexual function.

Below the urinary passage is the entrance to the vagina. In the normal unmarried woman this opening is partly closed by a thin membrane, the *hymen*. It appears in various shapes but in most cases it is a crescent-shaped forward extension of the back wall of the vagina. The hymen is usually nicked and stretched at the first coitus, occasioning in many cases some slight bleeding and pain. The bleeding and discomfort, when they occur, are not of sufficient consequence to warrant fear on the part of the woman in approaching this experience. Indeed it is important that fear be eliminated and that the woman enter into the first coitus with ready abandon, in pleasurable anticipation of the mutual satisfaction and joy to be achieved later, if not at once realized. This is important because fear powerfully inhibits her sexual responses and the function of the lubricating glands, leaving the parts dry. This increases the probability of discomfort and bleeding and diminishes the possibility of experiencing any sex pleasure at the first

## THE SEX MECHANISM

coitus. Occasionally a hymen is so tough that it does not yield to the pressure of attempted intercourse. In such cases the aid of the surgeon to slit the membrane should be promptly sought. Ignorance and awkwardness are responsible for much unnecessary pain and unsuccessful coitus in the early efforts.

There are still those who adhere to the notion that the manifest presence of the hymen is an infallible sign of virginity, and its absence a contrary sign. This is not true. The hymen is often stretched by local washing and douches or in medical examination.

During pregnancy the vagina and its outlet become capable of great expansion, permitting the passage of the child from the womb without injury in many cases. In most instances, however, more or less laceration of the muscular structure controlling the opening and of the vagina itself occurs. It should be understood that it is of great importance that such tears receive prompt surgical attention. The use and control of the muscles about the vaginal opening and of the entire pelvic floor are necessary to the woman's most effective participation in coitus. The relaxed condition and the loss of muscular control which results from the failure to repair perineal and vaginal

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

tears may result in greatly diminishing sexual satisfaction in coitus for both partners, and may render it impossible for the woman to achieve orgasm at all.

The two vulvo-vaginal glands, the *glands of Bartholin*, are situated one on each side of the opening of the vagina. This pair of glands is of great importance in coitus. Their function is to pour out a very slippery mucous secretion which lubricates the vaginal orifice and its surrounding parts in preparation for coitus. *These glands secrete freely only under sexual excitement.* Hence inadequate preliminary stimulation of the woman in love-play leaves the parts dry and unprepared for coitus, a condition which is not only inimical to successful coitus but which may cause unnecessary pain. These facts need to be understood particularly in reference to the initial period of intercourse in early days of marriage when inhibiting attitudes on the part of the wife may restrict the normal functioning of these glands. Where this is the case, artificial lubrication needs to be employed until a satisfactory adjustment of all the necessary factors has been brought about. These matters will be discussed later on.

The virgin *vagina*, the first in order of the internal

## THE SEX MECHANISM

sex organs, is a tube three and one-half to four inches in length along its back wall, in its normal relaxed state. It remains collapsed until some object is introduced into it. Its walls are elastic and it lies in folds, hence it is capable of great expansion both in length and diameter. The inner end of the vagina is closed by the neck of the womb which extends into it. The function of the vagina is to receive the penis of the male in coitus, to receive the discharge of semen in preparation for the journey of the spermatozoa into the womb and tubes, and it is the canal through which the child at birth passes from its home in the womb to the outside world. Two masses of veins, the *bulbs*, situated just within the opening of the vagina which become erect under sexual excitement, are the chief areas of sex feeling in the vagina.

The *uterus* (womb) is a pear-shaped organ of heavy muscular walls. The virgin uterus measures about two and three-quarters inches in length and one and three-quarters inches in width. The uterus of the woman who has had children is about three and one-half inches long and two and one-half inches wide. The organ is supported in the pelvis by strong ligaments. Its position is at right angles to the vagina, the



## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

upper, heavy end being directed forward toward the front of the pelvis. The small end (cervix) opens into the vagina and closes its upper end. (See figure 3, p. 71). During pregnancy the uterus increases in size enormously, expanding in conformity to the growth of the child, and rising high up into the abdomen. After childbirth the organ gradually retracts to its former size.

In civilized life, through general lack of local muscular development and other factors, the uterus frequently becomes displaced or bent upon itself. Many cases of sterility (loss of power to conceive) result from these conditions. They also cause varying degrees of indisposition and illness. Displacements or flexions are corrected by treatment or surgical measures. In about one-third of these cases the correction restores fertility. Bends of the uterus are frequently permanently corrected by pregnancy.

From the upper end of the uterus the *Fallopian tubes*, each about five and one-half inches long, extend right and left to the ovaries. Their function is to conduct the ova (eggs) from the ovaries into the cavity of the uterus. This is accomplished through contractile action of the tubes, aided by very fine

## THE SEX MECHANISM

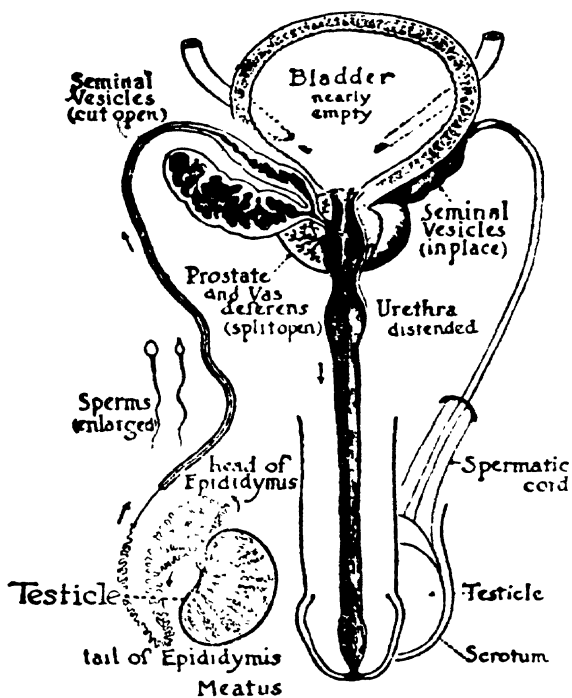
hair-like projections of the lining cells which keep up a sweeping motion in one direction, like a field of grain waving in the wind, thus keeping the current of the secretions and, hence, the egg, moving toward the uterus. In most cases of conception the egg is fertilized during its passage through the tube, and undergoes the first stages of its development during that passage.

The *ovaries* are comparable to the testes of the male. They produce the female reproductive cells, the ova (eggs) and internal secretions. The ovaries are situated at the outer ends of the tubes, one on each side of the uterus. An ovary is about the size and shape of a large almond in the shell. The hormone function of the ovaries is apparently more complex than that of the testes of the male. In addition to the internal secretion which governs the development of the specific female characters and helps to sustain the normal functioning of the individual as an organism, the ovaries elaborate other chemical substances which control the reproductive functions. If the ovaries are removed before puberty the development of the individual becomes profoundly altered, as was indicated in reference to male castration.

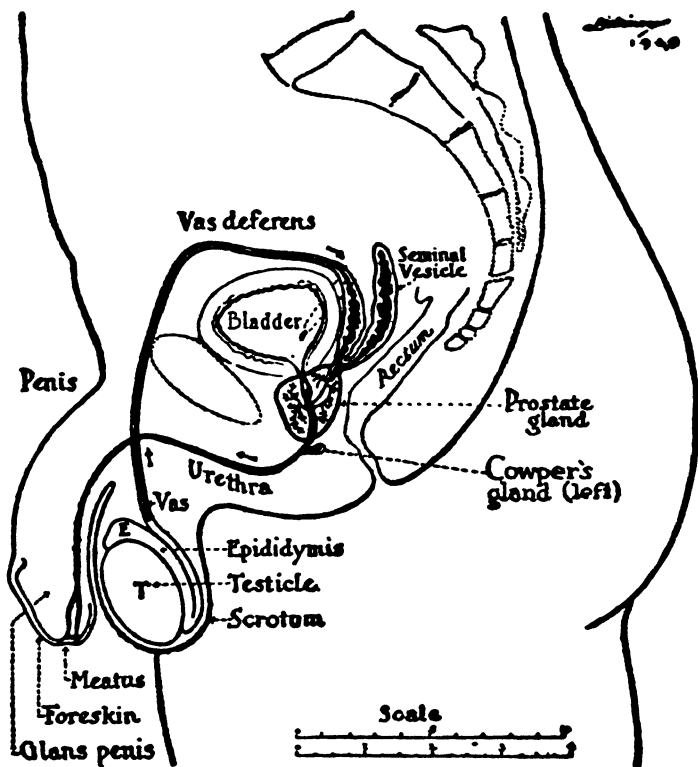
## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

An egg cell is about the size of the small dot of an i, just visible to the eye. From the ovaries eggs are periodically expelled. A tiny pouch (follicle) is formed, containing a liquid substance and a single egg cell. When the follicle has ripened and reached the surface of the ovary, it bursts, the egg is liberated and finds its way into the oviduct or tube. If during its passage through the tube it becomes fertilized by a spermatozoön, it attaches itself to the wall of the uterus, the lining membrane of which has become specially prepared for its reception and nourishment, and the development of the egg, already begun in the tube, continues until birth. If the egg is not fertilized, it is cast out of the body through the vagina.

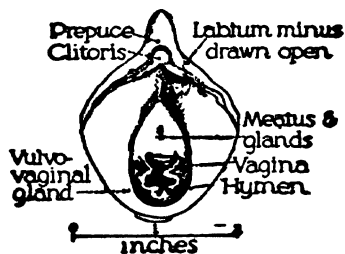
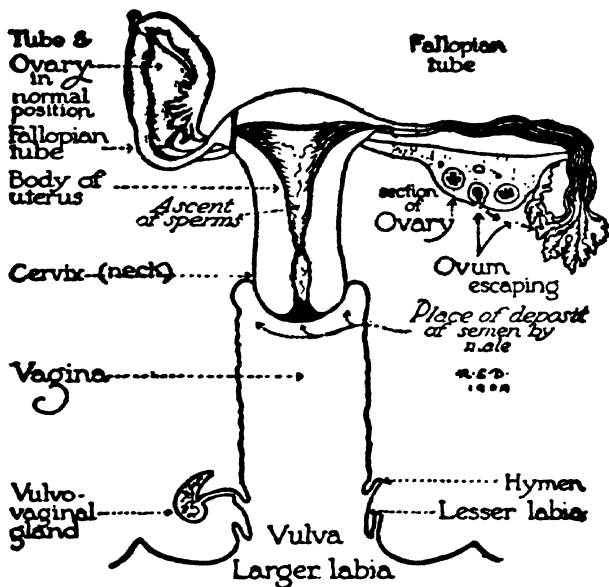
Having expelled the egg cell, the follicle in the ovary becomes temporarily an internal secretion gland (corpus luteum), the function of which is to provide the best possible conditions for the protection and development of the egg. The secretions stimulate the physiological processes of the body generally and cause special growth of the lining of the uterus in preparation for the development of the egg. If the egg is fertilized the corpus luteum grows larger and exercises its influence during several



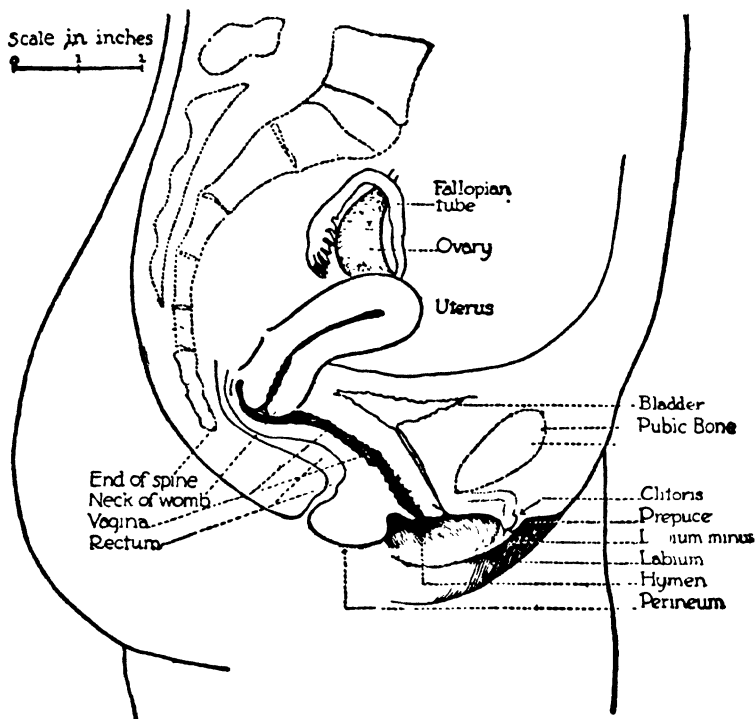
*Figure 1, MALE ORGANS*  
FRONT VIEW



*Figure 2, MALE ORGANS*  
SIDE VIEW



**Figure 3, FEMALE ORGANS**  
**FRONT VIEW**



*Figure 4, FEMALE ORGANS*  
SIDE VIEW

## THE SEX MECHANISM

months of pregnancy. If the egg is not fertilized the corpus luteum diminishes and disappears; the special preparation of the lining of the uterus now being useless, the cells disintegrate, to be carried out with the mucous secretions mixed with blood, which constitute the menstrual flow. Menstruation means that an ovum released from the ovary has failed to become fertilized and that nature's preparations for the development of the egg having become useless, they are being demolished and the débris cast out. If the egg becomes fertilized the influence of the corpus luteum prevents the ripening of a new egg, for nature does not now need another. If the egg is not fertilized the growth of a new follicle at once begins.

Menstruation generally continues for three to five days but longer in not a few cases. While it is a normal physiological function, not to be regarded as "sickness" or "being unwell," in severe cases the general let-down and the readjustments of the entire organism do involve nervous tensions and in many cases some aches and pains for which allowance needs to be made in the personal and social regime of the individual. In those cases in which the disturbances are



## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

considerable, a return to normal is greatly facilitated by spending the first day quietly, lying down much of the time, getting extra sleep, and engaging in congenial occupation such as reading.

CHAPTER III  
*SEX DIFFERENCES*



## CHAPTER III

### *SEX DIFFERENCES*

**T**HE psychological sex differences which so profoundly influence the functions and relations of men and women are of course intimately intertwined with the anatomical and physiological differences, and can be fairly discussed only in full recognition of this interdependence. For our purpose, however, the anatomical and physiological aspects have been perhaps sufficiently discussed in the chapter on the sex mechanism. We shall concern ourselves here chiefly with a consideration of the psychological differences, with due regard for their physiological setting.

The extreme importance of a clear understanding of the psychological differences and their bearings upon sound adjustment in marriage cannot easily be overemphasized. The appalling maladjustments and frustrations which have been shown in the Introduction, and others that will be revealed, have arisen in very large measure out of ignorance and disregard of these differences. Knight Dunlap says,<sup>1</sup> "Many

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cases of marriage failures come to the psychologist for adjustment: cases in which in spite of the real attachment of husband and wife, and the desires of both to realize a spiritual union, the union is not attained and the family has begun to disintegrate. In these cases, the outstanding fact is ignorance of the psychology of sex; and the work of the psychologist in adjusting these families is largely the teaching of simple facts in regard to the mental sex life. Unless both the man and the woman understand the essential emotional differences between them, the chances of successful marriage are small. Very often, both mates learn with sufficient rapidity during marriage; but very often also a family is wrecked before the knowledge has been attained."

In this discussion we shall draw fully, with frank acknowledgment and appreciation, upon Dunlap's clear analysis. It is first of all necessary to take a much more comprehensive view of what is included in the term *sex desire* than is commonly held. To most people it means desire for sex intercourse. This is altogether too narrow a meaning. In Dunlap's use of the term it embraces all physiological and emotional urges

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology.*

## SEX DIFFERENCES

that arise out of sex differences. He says, "Just as we uniformly designate all characteristics which are peculiar to the female, or to the male, as *sex characteristics*, whether they are characteristics of the sex organs, or secondary characteristics such as differences in stature, in form, and in bony development, so also, and for the same reason, we designate desire which is determined as to its object by the differentiation of the sexes, as *sex desire*." In this sense sex desire ranges all the way from desire of a man or a woman for association with members of the other sex at the tea table, to passionate desire for coitus. Both these extremes represent desire for mutual stimulation in association with a member of the other sex in a way in which we do not desire stimulation in association with our own sex. The desire springs out of sex differences and hence is sex desire. For clarity in this matter we shall note Dunlap's further analysis. He distinguishes the following three forms of sexual desire:

1. *Generalized personal desire*. "A man or woman may be 'interested' in individuals of the other sex, without the selection of a particular individual who is desired above all others." It is desire for the society

## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

of individuals of the other sex, for reciprocal stimulation in social intercourse with them; that is, the individual not only desires the stimulation that comes from social intercourse with members of the other sex but desires that they also be stimulated by him, and the consciousness that they are, enhances the stimulation he experiences. Desires of these types are satisfied in such social activities as conversation, walking, skating, dancing and playing games.

2. *Particularized personal desire.* This form of desire is focussed upon a particular individual and yields a higher form of satisfaction. It is illustrated in the individual who is "in love." "The personal desires of the lover are toward the loved one, and it is her society (or his society), her stimulation, and common stimuli and common activity with her, which are preëminently desired." From desire thus particularized, generalized desire may be wholly excluded or it may tend to coexist with it. Essentially, for the man really in love, it is no longer desire for *woman* but *the woman*.

3. *Specific sex desire.* This is desire primarily for sexual intercourse. The act itself and details connected with it are focal in consciousness. "The stimu-

## SEX DIFFERENCES

lus desires and common activity desires are merely such as conduce most effectively to the completion of the act."

In experience these three types of sex desire do not, of course, remain so sharply defined, but they grade into one another through many stages. Between one extreme of generalized and the other extreme of particularized personal desire we have the whole range from desire which finds its satisfaction from general sociability with an individual of a type—which satisfaction could be furnished by any one of a number of individuals of the same general type—to the most exclusive particularization of the individual deeply in love. Again, "the personal desire shades gradually into the specific and *vice versa* in a temporal way; and there is a gradation of blends of the two at definite times. Very often, the particularized desire begins in the personal form, and grows in time into the specific; and frequently that which commences as relatively specific desire for a given individual grows in time into a comprehensive personal desire." The point which at the moment we wish our readers especially to note is the inclusive range of sex desire. It embraces all the physical and



## THE SEXUAL SIDE OF MARRIAGE

emotional urges toward the other sex which arise out of the differences between men and women. All the emotions of friendship and of love between the sexes are included in sex desire.

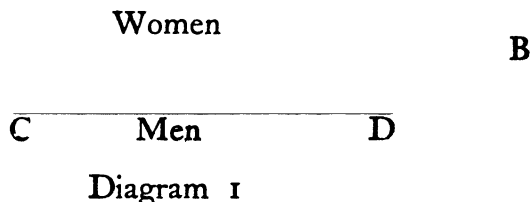
The point of emphasis here is upon the fact that the forms of sex desire referred to manifest themselves differently in women and in men, and that these differences in manifestation are profoundly important in their bearing upon marital adjustments. We shall discuss the differences in some detail.

1. Dunlap considers the most important sex difference in desire to be that in man it is more uniform in type, and in women more diverse. While there are individual variations among men, and while a few individuals may differ widely from the general type, the overwhelming majority of men differ only mildly in type of desire, however much they may differ in its gratification. In women the range of variation is much greater; the extremes are wider apart.

We may illustrate this point in reference to sexual capacity and responsiveness, by diagram. In diagram 1, p. 83, let the line A-B represent the range of difference in women; placing at point A the truly

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“frigid” woman who is constitutionally anaesthetic sexually, and at point B the nymphomaniac whose sex desires are so persistent as to be unremittingly pressing and beyond the possibility of satisfaction. Between these extremes, both of which are fortunately rare, we have shading up and down the scale a wide range of capacity and responsiveness. If the range of variation in men were to be represented on the same line it would fall—very approximately, for we have no data adequate for accuracy in the matter—about between points C and D.



It is to be noted that not only is there a much greater range toward frigidity in women but also a greater range toward capacity for passion than there is in men. Dunlap says, “It is not to be supposed that on the average the sexual desires of men are any stronger than those of women, although the conditions of arousal may be different. It is even possible

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that the reverse is true; and it is certainly true that in very many women the desires, when fully aroused, have a violence far surpassing that of the average man."

It will be seen at once that the differences between men and women just indicated create of themselves problems of sexual adjustment. Suppose that a man whose sexuality would be represented at point D in the scale, marries a woman half way between points A and C. In such a case the problem of achieving a mutually satisfying and harmonious sex relationship is obvious. However, with reasonably adequate knowledge of human sex nature, freedom from repressing inhibitions, skillful technique and a sympathetic, unselfish love-relationship, a mutually satisfying adjustment may be made. But ignorance, lack of skill and inconsideration are almost sure to stack the cards against such a marriage. A woman half way between points D and B marrying a man at point C reverses the problem.

2. "In man, sex desire is frequently present in highly specific form without any particularization, and with a minimum of even generalized personal desire." That is, in man sex excitement or physical

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passion often arises spontaneously without the stimulus that comes from women generally or from association with a particular woman upon whom desire is centered. It may arise, for example, as a result of the internal secretion function of the testicles. These secretions gradually build up a physiological tension which at any moment may result in conscious passionate excitement without stimulation through association with the other sex.

Specific desire in women is less likely to appear except as it arises out of the particularized personal form; in many women it seldom or never arises in any other way. That is, desire for coitus arises in women much more generally through personal association with members of the other sex. While the internal secretion function of the ovaries also produces a sex tension in women, it is on the whole more diffused, less localized in the sex organs than it is in men, and hence does not so frequently result in specific desire and excitement.

3. "Personal desire in man passes very easily and quickly into the specific form, without requiring intermediate activities, such as caresses." That is, the psychic stimulation derived from general social inter-

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course with women or a particular woman may easily and quickly give rise to specific sex desire.

In women, "personal desire does not pass so automatically into the specific but requires the intermediate stimulation of caresses. The woman, in many cases, must have personal desire for the man, involving finally the desire to be tactually and kinaesthetically stimulated by him; and these stimulations arouse the specific desire." An understanding of and adaptation to this difference in arriving at specific sex desire in the marriage relationship is of extreme importance. It will be shown that upon this rock more than any other, marital barks that sail out of the harbor in high promise are wrecked.

4. On the average, men and women differ widely in the time required to achieve orgasm in coitus. Most women require a considerably greater prolongation of the act than most men. When the man reaches the orgasm instantly or within one or two minutes and the woman requires from ten to fifteen minutes, the problem of adjustment may be formidable. But here also, understanding, skillful art in love and sympathetic consideration can in most cases bridge the chasm. The rock which marks this temporal

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difference between men and women, in sexuality, is twin to the rock mentioned in the preceding section (difference in arriving at specific desire) and lies in the same threatening shoal.

5. "Man seldom loses the general desire for long periods of time, but is during most of his life, no matter how definitely he particularizes, 'susceptible' to women generally. When the woman's personal desire becomes particularized, although the general desire is seldom completely lost, it lessens or decreases more markedly than it does in man; to a degree so small usually that it precludes her particularization upon another man until she loses her particularization upon the first man."

Dunlap, speaking of his description of woman's sex nature, which we in general adopt, says, "The description applies to a certain range of types of women only, although that range probably includes the majority. There are others who in type are like the average man; and still others who go to the other extreme of never having any specific desire: an extreme which is seldom if ever approximated by man except he be mentally or physically defective, or seriously diseased. Between these two wide extremes

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all gradations in feminine type are represented."

6. In the great majority of women sex desire varies with the menstrual cycle. At certain periods in the cycle she is more easily aroused sexually than at other times or specific desire may arise spontaneously without external stimulation. There occurs a tidal ebb and flow in sex desire which in some women is so marked and so regular that they can definitely locate its peak by date, in relation to menstruation, while other women recognize a periodicity in desire but are not conscious that these periods come with regularity. Other women do not recognize any periodicity at all.

While the occurrence of the peak of periodic desire in those women who recognize a periodicity is scattered all through the menstrual month of twenty-eight days, in the overwhelming majority of women it falls in or about the menstrual period: a few days before; during; a few days after; before and during; during and after; or before, during and after.

In the Davis study, in the one thousand histories of unmarried women, all but 132 admit sex feelings, sex desires, or some form of sex expression. Of the 868 who make this admission, 272 have recognized regular periodicity of sex desire. Of these, 110 date it

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so closely that it was possible to chart the date of desire with reference to the menstrual period. A group of 298 reported experiencing desire periodically but not with regularity. A group of 238 women have observed no periodicity of desire. According to Dr. Davis, of these women who could date their period of heightened desire definitely, about half experienced a lesser wave of desire later in the month, following the greater period of desire.

The fact of significance in relation to happy adjustment in marriage is that most women experience a natural monthly periodicity of responsiveness to sex stimulation. A woman may be eagerly responsive and quickly aroused when at the crest of her desire, and indifferent or cold and slow to arouse at the ebb-tide of desire. This does not mean that full, mutually satisfying coitus may not be achieved during the period of ebb-tide but it does mean that the whole approach and art of the husband and their mutual love-play must be adapted to the physiological situation and the corresponding psychological mood. While the sexual capacities of the woman have not been altered, the conditions of arousal have been altered. It requires a different degree and kind of woo-



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ing. The direct and even crude approach that may be effective and welcome at the crest of woman's rhythm is likely to be ineffective at the ebb-tide and may be disastrous to marital harmony. Sex relations for which a welcome by the woman has not been prepared become to the woman in most cases not merely an indifferent experience; they tend to become an affront to and an outrage of her whole being. Lack of physical response tends to loss of spiritual intimacy, and coitus without that intimacy wears a threatening mien. It threatens to give rise to a definitely negative attitude in the woman in which her emotional excitement is not with but against the husband. In time such an attitude is likely to frustrate the woman's passionate responsiveness to the husband even at the high tide and lead to complete separateness in sex life. It is ignorant or selfish bungling at this point that brings the expressions of shock, of disgust and of gnawing disappointment which run so extensively through the case histories of such studies as we have referred to. Happy adjustment in this regard requires mutual understanding, mutual consideration and mutual acquiring of the art of loving.

Some have sought to discover in men a sexual

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periodicity somewhat analogous to the periodicity found in women but there is as yet no evidence to support such a view.

7. A very important difference between men and women is that men upon attaining sexual maturity in early adolescence uniformly come into full possession of their sexual capacities and do not require sexual experience for the development of these powers, whereas, says Dunlap, "The development of sexual desire in the woman is far more a matter of education, through sexual stimulation and sexual experience, than is the case with the man. In many women the desire is very slight until developed by repeated stimulations and experiences, and may thereafter be powerful and easily aroused. In many others the desire is never developed to a very high level, even though they may be married for years, and to some of them sexual intercourse eventually becomes intensely repugnant. In most of these cases, the conditions of intercourse have been abnormal through absence of the appropriate psychological details, frequently because of the dense ignorance of the husband." This fact is abundantly borne out in Dickinson's and Hamilton's case histories, and also those of Davis.

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They present a tragic array of cases in which the sexual capacities of the woman, although present, as the histories show, stood no chance of being released and developed in coitus with the husband, because of ignorance and blundering ways on the part of both, aggravated by deep-seated inhibitions. The common sequence of experience shown is that the wife does not participate in the full sexual experience. Before long she drifts from passivity or partial response progressively toward indifference and definite negation. The husband concludes that "she is not that way" and accepts the unequal experience philosophically, whereas the wife does so rebelliously. Her unsatisfied sexuality is driven in upon herself, and while sexually cold to the husband, she has the problem of unsatisfied desire.

Of course it requires a rare combination of personality and character traits to assimilate happily such a sexual relationship in the total relations of husband and wife. As we have intimated before, it is inevitable that in many cases this gulf should come to intervene in the other areas of their life also and the marriage should become "unhappy," if no worse.

Havelock Ellis cites the case of a woman who

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failed ever to experience an orgasm in some years of life with one husband and subsequently with a second. A third husband quickly aroused her to full sexual experience and she developed a normal and vigorous sexual capacity. Other similar cases occur in case histories.

Women who are approaching marriage, and young brides should not fail to observe the hopefulness that lies in the fact that the sexual capacities of women are subject to education and development through experience. If the young bride finds disappointment in her sexual life in the early weeks or months of marriage it is not necessarily of serious significance. In most cases it only requires a correct diagnosis of the adverse factors and an intelligent use of the appropriate remedy with persistence and mutually sympathetic coöperation.

In summary of the sex differences, we may say that in men sex desire is fairly uniform; it lies close to the surface and is easily aroused and quickly satisfied, and man is always liable to sex desire in all its forms. In women sex desire is variable; it lies deeper and is more slowly aroused and more slowly satisfied; it is subject in most women to tidal rhythm; and it is

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subject to development to full power through experience. In the next chapter we shall discuss more fully the adjustment problems that arise out of these differences and out of ignorance of them.

CHAPTER IV

*SEX FACTORS IN MALAD-  
JUSTMENTS*



## CHAPTER IV

### *SEX FACTORS IN MALADJUSTMENTS*

**W**<sup>E</sup> will now consider the elements which most commonly contribute to sexual maladjustment in marriage, keeping in view the sex differences which have been discussed. This will prepare the way for a summary of the positive factors which make for ideal marriage.

We place first among the unfavorable factors the attitude toward human sexuality still commonly held which denies the sexual needs and rights of woman. While with the growing "emancipation" of women there has come already a marked improvement in understanding and in attitude in regard to this matter, the mediaeval conception of sexual activity as an exclusively masculine function in the exercise of which the woman's part remains a passive one, does not easily give way. Throughout the research studies to which we are referring, male ignorance and disregard of woman's sexual capacities and needs is obviously a prime factor in the apparent coldness of



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women and the maladjustments that grow out of the unequal sexual relationships. We have already pointed out this fundamental error and have shown that woman's sexual needs are, despite their different manifestations, fully comparable to those of man. Persistent passivity and frustration of response in coitus are a violation of woman's biological nature, and, like all violations of nature, are fraught with evil consequences. First of all, they are detrimental to the woman's physical and emotional health and balance. Hamilton says, "It is, I think, one of the most suggestive findings of my research that, of the forty-six women who are inadequate as to orgasm capacity, twenty had been diagnosed at one time or another in their lives as more or less seriously psychoneurotic. These diagnoses were made by psychiatrists other than myself. *Only one of the fifty-four women who could have orgasm with reasonable frequency had ever been regarded as psychoneurotic.*" With the caution of the scientist Hamilton adds, "Although inability to have orgasm and more or less serious nervous symptoms occur together with significant frequency, it is only in a qualified sense that we can regard one as the resultant of the other. Chronic

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sexual unsatisfaction may augment or even precipitate nervous symptoms, but the weight of evidence is strongly in favor of the view that when a psycho-neurosis and an inadequate orgasm capacity occur together in a woman they must be regarded as resultants of a common cause." Be that as it may, we cannot escape the conclusion that persistently frustrated sexuality in women is a powerful factor in precipitating if not causing psychoneurotic disorders. We do not inherit insanity but only a predisposition toward mental unbalance. It does not mean that insanity must result. It only means that in such a person adverse conditions of living may tip the balance toward mental disturbance, when under more favorable conditions of living normal balance might be sustained. The same principle holds true for other forms of psychoneurotic disturbances. Dickinson has shown that almost all of the women who were failing in orgasm experience possessed inherent erotic capacities but that these powers were blocked of fulfillment by a combination of circumstances for the most part avoidable. In the light of the experience revealed in the many case histories one may fairly assume that if the conditions of coitus had been more favorable, in

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Hamilton's group of women referred to, a larger proportion would have achieved satisfaction and hence a better health record.

Failure to recognize the sexual needs and rights of woman cuts also at the roots of marital love and harmony. Coitus, under these conditions, instead of being an act of supreme mutual intimacy, vivifying, enriching and developing love, becomes an ego-centric performance for the husband which in turn forces the wife's sexuality also to center within herself. Harris says,<sup>1</sup> "If either partner satisfies himself or herself at the expense of the other, the bond of affection may be strained beyond endurance. It is thus that men bruise and batter love through selfishness or ignorance." Again, "Men and women fail to realize that this phase of their common life is integrally a part of all the rest. The sexual relationship is not part of the partnership unless it is a genuinely shared experience. But what is meant by sharing the sexual experience? Precisely this, that the whole experience—from the first caress to the climax of sexual intercourse—shall mean essentially the same to both and shall bring the same enduring satisfaction to

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Marriage.*

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both. The whole range of sexual acts must bring the same harmonious experience of love and joy to both partners."

A first requisite for a mutually satisfying and enriching love-life in marriage is a frank and full acceptance of mutual sexual capacities and needs. Ellis says,<sup>1</sup> "Women whose instincts are not perverted at the roots do not desire to be cold. Far from it. But to dispel that coldness the right atmosphere is needed, and the insight and skill of the right man. In the erotic sphere a woman asks nothing better of a man than to be lifted above her coldness, to the higher plane where there is reciprocal interest and mutual joy in the act of love. Therein her silent demand is one with Nature's. For the biological order of the world involves those claims which, in the human range, are the erotic rights of women."

A too direct, too exclusively physical approach to coitus is one of the most common and most baneful factors in marital maladjustments. Every single act, if it is to be a truly shared experience, an act that has something of spiritual significance, calls for prelude,

<sup>1</sup> *Little Essays of Love and Virtue.*

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for courtship and wooing. It requires exercise of what Havelock Ellis has so aptly called "the play-function of sex." Truly human sex relationships mean not merely a union of bodies but a union of two personalities, hence there needs first to be a union in emotional mood before there can be a physical union that is really vital to the marital partners. It is the greatest mistake to assume that courtship and wooing may cease at or soon after the wedding. If it ceases, marriage loses its romance, and such a marriage tends to become commonplace, or an irritating limitation of life, or to go on the rocks. Courtship needs to prevail in the total marital relationship as an atmosphere that exhilarates and renews the zest of life from day to day through all the difficult as well as the pleasant vicissitudes of life. Such a relationship leaves a married couple at seventy, lovers more truly than they were at twenty-five. But whether or not such an ideal is realized in the total relationship, an approach to coitus by way of courtship intimacies *in which both play their part* is indispensable. Such prelude may be brief or prolonged as meets the mood and the needs of the partners, particularly the wife. The emotional quality of the prelude is the essential test of its ef-

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ficacy. Here the skill of the lover comes to the test.

Some of the more recent publications dealing with marriage have fallen into the error of implying that the activities of foreplay are a function and responsibility of the husband only, and of implying that it consists essentially of a sort of mechanical process of stimulating the woman by manipulating her erotic areas. This is a serious error. Such stimulation may enter in, but only as a phase of mutual, reciprocal activity in play. The very term "play" suggests shared activity. Foreplay is not to be set off as separate from the supreme love-act of coitus. The complete relationship from the first touch or kiss to the postlude of repose is to be one of mutuality and sharing.

There are two important reasons for foreplay in coitus. The first grows out of the sex differences we have discussed. We have seen that in man personal desire passes easily and quickly into specific desire, or sexual excitement may arise spontaneously without any intermediate stimulation. He is quickly ready, physically and emotionally, for coitus, at least up to the age of fifty-five or sixty. Most women, on the other hand, require more or less prolonged stimulation—emotional or physical or both—to awaken and

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develop specific desire. The point of readiness which the man may reach instantly or quickly, the woman in most cases must reach by way of a winding path through her psycho-physical being, a path to be trod not alone but in the subtle, delicate intimacies of love-play with her mate.

Another sex difference that enters in is the fact that most women, even after an adequate prelude, require considerably more time to achieve orgasm in coitus than men do. Hence without preparatory love-play the possibilities of satisfaction for the woman become extremely doubtful in a large number of cases. Even at best there is always the problem of quickening for the woman and of slowing up for the man with a view to reaching orgasm simultaneously if possible, or at least both partners achieving the culmination before the completion of the act.

What happens with such amazing frequency, as shown by researches of recent years, is about the following experience: The couple falls into a certain routine of sex relations, based in most cases upon the needs and desires of the husband. There are no preliminaries. The woman, even though she may be lovingly sympathetic with her husband, enters upon

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the experience emotionally and physically unprepared. The man *must* be prepared or the act is not possible. Not so for the woman. The man reaches his climax quickly and the act ceases. The woman has remained unresponsive or, what is worse, she has been partially aroused or even highly excited but "left in the air." The natural, desired and deeply needed consummation has not been reached by her. The natural reaction of the man is to become relaxed, drowsy and to go to sleep. This relaxation of body and soul should be for both. There are often no moments of greater spiritual meaning in the relationships of married lovers than those moments when love has had its way and they rest relaxed in body and spirit in each other's arms. Instead, the woman, if she has remained cold, will too, perhaps, go to sleep, cold also in heart and spirit and with a dividing wall between. Or, if she has become stimulated and left unsatisfied, she may lie awake for hours, occasionally all night, tense and excited, unless she turns to auto-erotic relief. It requires but a moment of picturing the situation, in imagination—the man satisfied, breathing deeply in sound sleep, while the woman lies at his side tensely awake with unsatisfied longing, or re-



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sorts to self-relief—to realize how inevitable it is that sooner or later there should escape from her in the silence of the night such expressions as, “selfish,” “brute,” “animal,” “stupid,” and the like, and that this fundamental disappointment should bring disharmony into their whole relationship.

Speaking of the sexual life of the average man in our society, Ellis says of him,<sup>1</sup> “The more one knows about him . . . the more one is convinced that . . . his conception of erotic personality, his ideas on the art of love, if they have any existence at all, are of a humble character. As to the notion of play in the sphere of sex, even if he makes blundering attempts to practice it, that is for him something quite low down, something to be ashamed of, and he would not dream of associating it with anything he has been taught to regard as belonging to the spiritual sphere. The conception of ‘divine play’ is meaningless to him.” And as to the feminine side of the picture he says, “Let us turn to the average woman. Here the picture must usually be still more unsatisfactory. The man at least, crude as we may find his two fundamental notions to be, has at all events attained mental

<sup>1</sup> *Little Essays of Love and Virtue.*

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pride and physical satisfaction. The woman often attains neither, and since the man, by instinct or tradition, has maintained a self-regarding attitude, that is not surprising. The husband—by primitive instinct partly, certainly by ancient tradition—regards himself as the active partner in matters of love and his own pleasure as legitimately the prime motive for activity. His wife consequently falls into the complementary position, and regards herself as the passive partner and her pleasure as negligible, if not as a thing to be rather ashamed of, should she by chance experience it. So that, while the husband is content with a mere simulacrum of pretense of the erotic life, the wife has often had none at all. . . . She has never once been profoundly aroused, and she has never once been utterly satisfied. The deep fountains of her nature have never been unsealed; she has never been fertilized throughout her whole nature by their liberating influence; her erotic personality has never been developed.” And Ellis adds this warning, the force of which is dramatically emphasized by the tragic results of such inadequate and unequal relationships as are revealed in modern research studies, “That alone is a great misfortune, all the more

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tragic since under favorable conditions, which it should have been natural to attain, it might so easily be avoided. But there is this further result, full of the possibilities of domestic tragedy, that the wife so situated, however innocent, however virtuous, may at any time find her virginally sensitive emotional nature fertilized by the touch of some other man than her husband."

A second important reason for affectionate foreplay as a prelude in coitus is the fact that in most cases a direct physical approach not only fails to awaken the woman's erotic powers but such an approach is definitely inhibiting and repellent to most women, especially those of sensitive and refined nature. Let no man venture into the intimacy of coitus with any woman for whose personality he has sincere regard until he has learned that the avenue to the deep resources of passion in the woman's affectionate nature leads through the most sensitive, most idealistic areas of her emotional realm. The man who makes that approach on a physical plane does so at the peril of bitterness, estrangement and mutual defeat. The woman who related that on her bridal night, as soon as the couple had retired, the

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husband seized her in a passionate embrace and proceeded to intercourse, voiced the reaction of an endless number of women when she said, "I felt raped and hated him from that moment on."

The approach to the physical is by way of the spiritual.<sup>1</sup> When the woman has been wooed and won into spiritual harmony she will give herself to passionate expression of love with free and full abandon. And only so can the man also experience real fulfillment of love.

It is in vivid consciousness of these realities that Ellis stresses in masterly fashion the "play-function of sex." He says,<sup>2</sup> "There are, as we know, two main functions in the sexual relationship, or what in the biological sense we term 'marriage,' among civilized human beings, the primary physiological function of begetting and bearing offspring and the secondary spiritual function of furthering the higher mental and emotional processes." By way of interpreting this secondary function he says, "The play-function of sex is at once in an inseparable way both physical and psychic. It stimulates to wholesome activity all

<sup>1</sup> The term "spiritual" is not used in a mystic or theological sense but as denoting the whole psychic realm of the personality.

<sup>2</sup> *Little Essays of Love and Virtue.*

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the complex and interrelated systems of the organism. At the same time it satisfies the most profound emotional impulses, controlling in harmonious poise the various mental instincts. Along these lines it necessarily tends in the end to go beyond its own sphere and to embrace and introduce into the sphere of sex the other two more objective fields of play, that of play as education, and that of play as artistic creation. It may not be true, as we said of old time, 'most of our arts and sciences were invented for love's sake.' But it is certainly true that, in proportion as we truly and wisely exercise the play-function of sex, we are at the same time training our personality on the erotic side and acquiring a mastery of the art of love." Ellis continues: "The longer I live the more I realize the immense importance for the individual of the development through the play-function of erotic personality, and for human society of the acquirement of the art of love. At the same time I am ever more astonished at the rarity of erotic personality and the ignorance of the art of love even among those men and women, experienced in the exercise of procreation, in whom we might most confidently expect to find such development and such art. At times one

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feels hopeless at the thought that civilization in this extremely intimate field of life has yet achieved so little."

Harris says, "The development of sex relations until they are an art demand patience with each other, if not indeed a sense of humor at difficulties. Successful sex relationships have a definite technique and demand the development of skill as much as dancing, skating, or other experiences of a man or woman. At first, a couple will be awkward and clumsy. If instead of being hurt, they coach each other and have fun in their practice, their very inefficiencies may form the basis of their sharing. . . . It is wise for a couple to approach their wedding with a full realization of this indubitable fact: it takes time to acquire skill in the art of love."

The tragic course of the common factors in maladjustments which we have so far discussed—ignorance, bungling, denial of woman's erotic nature, physical approach, absence of foreplay—are portrayed with dramatic vividness in Dickinson's study of fifty young brides, among his case histories. These young women were seen by him chiefly or only in the beginning of their married life, usually not later than

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its ninth month. They were women in good health, contented and with excellent professional training, but who had difficulty in the sexual relationship. In these women as a group the anticipations of engagement, in the sexual sphere, were not being realized. In the man there was hesitation, in the woman there was fear, and these together with very limited knowledge resulted in a situation in which after less than a year of marriage more than half of these women were complaining of sexual difficulty. Eighteen of them had dyspareunia,<sup>1</sup> four were frigid, five had sexual maladjustment of some sort. Of forty-one reporting on the matter, seventeen had not been able to achieve complete coitus and had not experienced orgasm. Of this group twenty-seven were maladjusted, to twenty-three who were presumably adjusted.

That these difficulties are in the main preventable is strikingly indicated in Dickinson's experience with this group. He states that there is a difference in immediate sexual adjustment between the fifteen women who had premarital examination and those

<sup>1</sup> Painful coitus. It will be shown that in most cases this is due to psychic states.

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who had not. The former were more easily able to get orgasm in coitus. In their reports to the physician after marriage, twelve of the fifteen reported orgasm in their post-marital visits. On the other hand, of thirty-five not given premarital instruction twenty-five had had no orgasm.

One of the most prevalent factors in marital maladjustments is too brief intromission (connection) in coitus. We have seen that even when there is intelligent and sympathetic adaptation in coitus, women require on the average more time in achieving orgasm than men do. The whole mutual technique must be adapted to the end of arriving at orgasm simultaneously or at least of enabling the woman to reach her climax also during the period between the entrance of the male organ and the subsiding of the man's erection, following his orgasm. Some men are able to control their reactions and to wait for the wife until she is ready to join him in the vigorous completion of the act with mutual climax. Some men although capable of such control fail their partners in this regard because they are ignorant of their needs in this matter. However, a large proportion of men with



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the best of intentions have difficulty in successfully meeting this situation, and this fact is in large measure responsible for the appalling disparity in orgasm experience as shown in various studies. All through the case histories runs the wistful or resentful complaint of women who are left cold—"he is too quick." Of those who blunder in ignorance, Dickinson observes, "When he says 'she is unresponsive,' we nearly always find that she says he is 'too quick.' There is a correlation between frigidity and quick emission."

In answer to Hamilton's question, "Do you believe that your orgasms occur too quickly for your wife's pleasure?", of the one hundred husbands, fifty-five answered "yes" (fifteen with reservations); only twenty-eight answered with an unqualified "no."

In answer to the question, "Do you believe that your husband's orgasms occur too quickly for your own pleasure?", of the one hundred wives forty-eight answered "yes" (eleven with reservations), and only thirty-three answered with an unqualified "no."

In answer to the question, "Do you believe that if your husband were slower in coming to his orgasm you would have orgasms more frequently?", forty-

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three of the wives answered in the affirmative; and it is significant to note that exactly the same number of husbands also answered this question in the affirmative in reference to their wives.

Force is added to these revelations when, in answer to the question, "Are there times when you feel unsatisfied after your husband has had his orgasm?", out of the one hundred wives seventy-four answered "yes" (nineteen with reservations) and only eight answered with an unqualified "no."

In answer to the further question, "Is your husband generally quicker or slower than you in coming to an orgasm?", eighty-three of the wives stated that the husband was naturally quicker; only six stated that the husband was slower than the wife; and only six affirmed that their orgasms were synchronous. Confirmation is furnished by the husbands, eighty-four of whom also stated that they were naturally quicker than their wives and only three affirmed that they were slower.

Obviously this natural disparity between men and women in the temporal range of their sexuality works hand in glove with the other adverse factors already cited, especially the absence of emotional preparation

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for the woman, to defeat mutuality in sexual experience. It is a problem which calls for intelligent study by the marital partners together, for patient, tolerant experimentation in a spirit of coöperative, companionable fellowship; and if need be, the counsel and aid of the wise physician or psychiatrist. *It is a problem which must be solved* if continued happiness is to be assured. Failing in an adjustment which will with reasonable frequency bring fully releasing satisfaction to the wife as well as to the husband in coitus, an adjustment in relationship and technique needs to be arrived at such as will through other means bring to the wife climactic consummation. This is a compromise, to be sure, but life is full of compromises. Where there is sympathetic understanding, and the will to adjust, many an otherwise impossible situation in the married relationship has been made to yield reasonably adequate sex experience for both by such compromise measures.

Of Dickinson's cases 362 women furnished information as to the length of time between entry of the male and his ejaculation. "It appears that the median man holds an erection from five to ten minutes." We would say then that the median man

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is in a fairly adequate range provided all other conditions of coitus successful for both are observed. In the right atmosphere and with skillful prelude, one or two minutes may suffice when ten or fifteen minutes may be inadequate under adverse conditions.

Dickinson finds that every eighth or ninth man discharges "instantly." One in six does not exceed a two-minute intromission. He states that "up to three minutes" exhausts the staying power of 40 per cent. "From five to fifteen minutes" accounts for 43 per cent more. The remaining 17 per cent can wait for more than fifteen minutes, some of them for any desired length of time.

Let us consider in detail some of the factors that contribute to unduly quick emission in men, omitting for the moment those who discharge "instantly."

1. Nervousness. A man requires self-confidence and poise to keep his ejaculatory reflexes within reasonable control. Nervousness, whether it springs from general awkwardness, undue haste, anticipation of failure or an unsympathetic attitude on the part of the spouse, lessens control of the ejaculatory mechanism.

2. Fear. This is really but another name for nerv-

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ousness. Fear of failure, fear of pregnancy, fear of the wife's reaction tends to inhibit erection and incite early emission. By a sympathetic, reassuring, co-operative attitude the wife can help greatly in preventing nervousness and fear in the husband. A critical, adverse attitude tends to mess up the situation.

3. Inadequate erection. Penetration with only a partially erect penis is most likely to result in premature ejaculation. There is a surprising number of men who have difficulty in securing full, vigorous and sustained erection. An important contributory factor in many of these cases is unresponsiveness of the spouse. Coldness on the wife's part tends to inhibit the man's erection. The ineffectiveness of incomplete erection in turn fosters frigidity in the wife. Here you have the "vicious circle." In this matter, too, the sympathetic wife can be of great assistance. Few are the men who will not respond quickly with powerful erection to the wife's deft fondling of the husband's genitals.

4. Inadequate lubrication. Anything which makes entrance difficult tends toward early emission. In cases in which the wife's lubricating glands do not sufficiently respond to provide sufficient natural

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lubrication, artificial lubricants need to be resorted to. The vegetable jellies are on the whole more suitable than the fatty lubricants such as vaseline.

5. Wrong technique. Haste is to be avoided not only in securing entrance but at any point in the act except from the moment when synchronous orgasm begins. Then, like athletes near the end of their course, both partners should rush to the finish. An amazingly large number of men seem to have no better idea of technique than to take the shortest route between desire and satisfaction, that is, to finish as quickly as possible. Such crude method limits very greatly the aesthetic, emotional, affectional embellishments which lie on the spiritual arm of the scale of coitus and which powerfully enhance the ecstasy of sexual communion. Coitus in which the whole of each personality participates requires time and a more leisurely course to the finish. An exhilarating stroll in brisk air and sunshine of two lovers during which there is fascinating, stimulating interplay of the spiritual responses of their personalities will make infinitely more thrilling and satisfying the final mad rush down the hill together, to end in relaxation and sweet repose on the bank of a smoothly flowing

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stream. From the point of view of quality and fullness of satisfaction there must not be undue haste. We will consider the procedure by which many men are able to solve the problem of mutual orgasm.

Most men whose time range is short find that the irritability which threatens emission is greatest immediately upon entrance. It is advisable, therefore, not to pass on to motion at once but for the partners to rest passive when entrance has been made. It is found that the feeling of impending emission gradually lessens. For the man it may be necessary for the moment to let the mind rest upon non-sexual matters. When the man feels that it is safe, he begins motion gently and not deeply while the mate remains passive—as to action, *not* as to mood. As the man feels himself again approaching the brink he stops and both rest. And all along the mates are practising the delicate and subtle interchanges of the art of love which will enhance the vividness and satisfaction of mutual climax manifold when it comes. The man finds that gradually he secures increasing control and is able to extend each period of motion a little and to deepen the thrust. In a little time he will be ready to ask his partner to join him in gentle motion. He

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will keep her informed of his progress and both will rest again before the point of ejaculation is reached. And so they continue, their periods of mutual motion becoming steadily longer and more vigorous. Gradually the woman's responses become aroused and now she must keep him informed of her progress, and when she is in position to tell him, "I think I am ready," then the climactic rush down the hill together begins, *both participating* in vigorous, synchronous movements. If at the end of his natural course it is found that the wife has not been able to quite keep up with the husband, he will continue to run with her, so far as sustained erection permits, until she too reaches her destination. It is by such technique that some couples are enabled to prolong the act to a half hour or an hour. It is doubtful that this would be possible for any man with uninterrupted movement.

Probably the majority of women have the idea that motion in coitus belongs exclusively to the husband except when in orgasm it becomes irresistible. This is a serious error. By participating in motion she not only elicits most powerfully the responses of the husband but facilitates her own orgasm manifold.



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Van De Velde<sup>1</sup> says, "The activity of the man and the passivity of the woman . . . in ideal marriage should merge into a melodious *mutuality* of interaction and repose."

The cases of male inadequacy that are most distressing in their effects and often most difficult for the physician to deal with are the men of premature ejaculation, who have emission either immediately upon entrance or before entrance has been effected. Of course, virtually all such men are incapable of bringing climactic satisfaction to their spouses in coitus so long as this condition obtains. Fortunately, however, in many cases the factors involved are largely psychological and with friendly or professional assistance the condition is remediable. This condition is found just as frequently among the most intelligent and educated of men—if not more so—than it is among men of ordinary gifts. No man who is suffering from this inadequacy should permit himself to accept it as one to be endured, because not only will it bar him from ever experiencing the full, energizing satisfactions of vigorously potent sexuality but it will surely frustrate the sex life of his wife,

<sup>1</sup> *Ideal Marriage.*

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with all the baneful consequences that this holds out. In many cases, as in newly married men, the condition is a passing one, due mainly to nervousness and inexperience, which adjusts itself when there is a spirit of mutual tolerance and coöperation between couples. *But it is of the utmost importance that this condition be rectified early, for every delay operates to fix more deeply the habit of failure, to destroy self-confidence and lessen the possibility of rectification.* Since with premature ejaculation men do have orgasm and hence some sort of satisfaction, there is too easy a tendency on their part to accept the situation and do nothing to remedy it. This is not only a short-sighted and unmanly attitude to take from the point of view of the man's own larger life but it is utterly selfish in its lack of consideration of the woman. For her it means not merely a low grade of satisfaction, comparable to her husband's, but none at all with probably the additional exasperation and strain of repeated partial arousal and frustration.

The extent of this problem is indicated by Dickinson's data already given, that every eighth or ninth man discharges "instantly." When we add to this number the men who do so within a minute or so, a

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condition almost as inadequate for most women, the number becomes greatly increased. Reference to four cases which have come to the writer's attention in recent months may help us to appreciate some of the bearings of this problem.

Attendance by a young wife upon a lecture on marriage enabled her to get some insight into her own marital problem. She sent her husband for consultation. He was a man of good intelligence, holding a responsible business position in a highly competitive field. In sexual matters, however, he was as a very simple child. They had been married three years and in all that time had never achieved even the first stages of coitus. There was persistent premature ejaculation in the mere attempt at coitus. He was by now virtually in a state of psychological impotence. The first advice failed to help much. A medical examination revealed nothing organically wrong. The wife was found to be a normal sexually responsive woman. The couple was very congenial in all other respects but greatly distressed over this situation. They had agreed that if they could not succeed in working out this problem together in the near future,

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they would separate. Who shall say they should not? When last seen, little progress had been made. In this case success in solving the problem is doubtful unless physical treatment should be found to provide a basis for a psychological adjustment.

A second couple, also three years married, the husband having all this time experienced quick emission, became seriously estranged. The man had from the first accepted his handicap as inevitable and took no steps toward a satisfactory adjustment. The wife was by nature keenly responsive but the husband's capacity and method could not bring that responsiveness to fruition. The danger to which Ellis called attention was realized here. She had found her slumbering responses awakened by another man and divorce impended.

Another couple, exceptionally fine, intelligent and educated young people, unusually free from inhibitions, thoroughly modern in their outlook and attitudes, had been well instructed in sex matters before marriage. They had read together one of the most useful of the books on sex in marriage. They are great lovers—in the general sense—and exception-

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ally well adapted to one another in temperament and interests. Here seemed to be the possibilities of an ideal marriage.

Five months after the wedding it was found that the wife, though quite normally responsive, had not yet attained orgasm in coitus because of the husband's quick emission. With specific instruction they entered together upon experimentation. The technique suggested was virtually that which we have already explained—no haste, careful entry, rest upon entry, gradual approach to motion, gradual mutual participation in motion, etc. In many cases once full penetration without ejaculation resulting has been achieved, half the battle is won. Success in this case did not come at once but was achieved in a comparatively short time. Mutual orgasms were occurring in a sufficient proportion of copulations to assure ultimately a good adjustment.

Another couple very similar in type and circumstances to the one just described suffered from the same lack of harmony after six months of marriage, because of the quick emission of the husband. Considerable difficulty has been experienced in working out the problem but this modern young couple ap-

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preciates its importance and the progress made points to ultimate success. Once the wife has achieved orgasm in normal intercourse, ultimate victory is in sight.

If success is not attained after experimenting for a period not to exceed two or three months—preferably sooner—the man should consult a reputable genito-urinary specialist. Two promising means are employed: one, to instruct the man in the use of a local anaesthetic to be applied beneath the foreskin shortly before coitus with a view to numbing sensibility enough to slow up without preventing ejaculation; the other, to treat the deep urethra to remove excessive irritability. Some specialists claim to get good results by this means. It is important to warn men against falling into the hands of the advertising quack. If he does he will be fleeced of money; he will not likely be helped and he may be injured by the treatment given.

Failure on the part of a husband to respect and to adapt himself to the wife's natural rhythm of desire is another factor that frequently enters into marital maladjustments. We have seen that in most women

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desire comes in a more or less well-defined tidal variation which is related to the menstrual cycle. Men do not experience periodic variation in sex desire. Therefore, if they are ignorant of the existence of an ebb and flow rhythm in women, it is difficult for them to understand what seems to them merely variation in temperamental mood. Much friction and unhappiness arise out of this situation. A young couple marries. The young husband finds the wife at times eagerly responsive and participative. Then apparently suddenly there is a change. She is indifferent or cold and perhaps repels his approach. He may take this as an unexpected discovery that she is fickle, temperamental, does not know her own mind. She, not understanding the differences in their sexual constitutions, may look upon him as inconsiderate and excessive in his demands. Here may be the beginning of misunderstanding and friction. Understanding is first of all necessary for happy adjustment. Each husband must study his wife in this regard. If for her and their mutual happiness it is found necessary to avoid certain periods entirely, in the matter of intercourse, he will respect her wishes. If he finds that it merely requires a diminished frequency and a more

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lover-like approach and more delicate and more prolonged wooing in prelude, he will gladly and skillfully adapt his art of loving to the needs of her happiness. It goes without saying that perfect frankness between husband and wife is needed in order that the adjustment may be a happy one for both. The wife must help him understand so that his adaptation to her needs and moods may be made with sympathetic appreciation.

It is readily seen that in marital relationships in which the rhythm of woman's desire becomes a factor in adjustment, anything like a set routine in the matter of coitus such as is so commonly followed by married couples, is wholly inappropriate. In the first place such regularity is usually based upon the husband's desires and this fact at once violates the principle of mutuality. In the second place it does not allow for the necessary adaptation to the wife's periodic variation in desire.

These are, however, not the only reasons against making sex relations a matter of satisfying a routine want like the taking of meals. This is living too close to the animal level. It is not the way of love. Love demands spontaneity, change with the changing



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moods of the sky and with all the influences and circumstances that play upon life. Such routine tends to become unaesthetic, and love craves beauty. In love as an art, there will be periods when the passionate expression of love will hold the stage above all other interests, and periods in which the partners will concentrate their thought and energies together upon the serious demands of life to the exclusion of passionate relationship, and again, periods in which other congenial interests and other forms of play and recreation will dominate and when passionate relationships will take a subordinate place. Such a regime will yield mutual joy, development of personality and deepening and widening of comradeship as no regularized routine of sex relationship can do. Routine tends toward the commonplace, and the commonplace in love becomes deadening.

We have noted the fact that in women sexual responsiveness is largely subject to gradual awakening and development through repeated stimulation and experience. Cases have been cited to show that an adequate innate capacity may remain dormant during years of marriage for want of the needed appeal

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and stimulus to arouse and render it active. Ignorance of this characteristic of woman's sex nature leads to too ready an acceptance of the wife's defective response as her real nature and hence the acceptance of unequal sexual experience as inevitable. In such ways the development of the woman's sexual powers becomes often permanently blocked. Young brides especially, and their husbands, need to be in full possession of this knowledge, so that when the bride in the early weeks or months of marriage finds that coitus has little or nothing of the same meaning to her that it has to her husband, she will not suffer shock and bitter disappointment but will apply her intelligence to the problem of her sexual education. The husband likewise will not rest content but will join the wife in the development of method and experience which will gradually release the wife's natural powers.



CHAPTER V

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sex and passionate sex relations are in any way ignoble. More than that, they need a *positive* appreciation of love—in its wholeness—as the great dynamic of life, and of the fact that with the sex factor eliminated from the love of mates—if that were possible—love loses its dynamic power and becomes anaemic. The second, that parents, educators and leaders in all agencies that have to do with preparing the young for life may get some inkling of the extent of the damage which our social atmosphere and our cultural methods have done and are doing to marriage and the family and through them to society—done in the name of “purity” and “chastity” and “marriage ideals.”

Conscious that in any attempt to estimate native sexual endowment the influence of education and religion must be taken into account, Dickinson selected from the 1,098 histories of sex life which he studied, 115 cases of women who were under the influence of cultural tradition more than the average, with a view to comparing them with the whole group in reference to the effect of the cultural influences to which the women were subjected. Eighty-one of these women were the wives of husbands engaged in re-

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ligious occupations in the principal branches of organized religion, and thirty-four were college women.

In reference to the religious group the doctor states that the drift of the data is toward a sexual aloofness in marriage for moral reasons. Of the eighty-one women, fifty-four were suffering from some form of sexual maladjustment. He says, "It is intended to suggest, though not to assert, that these inhibitions which no doubt express the whole life code, run parallel to the patient's (or the husband's) interpretation of religious instruction."

The point of view of the average woman in Dickinson's group is to the effect that sex is low, that it is concerned with the lowest part of herself; and this attitude is frequently shared by the husband. Such expressions as, "We won't put love down to that," "There is something wrong in sex pleasure," "He will never dress or undress before me," are examples of the many expressions used which reveal an apologetic attitude toward the sexual side of marriage. Dickinson remarks, in reference to the husbands, "The wives of these . . . husbands are not free to take a spontaneous attitude toward sexual life; they have to fulfill the husband's ideal. To establish the

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other half of his theory, the really consistent wife must be somewhat cold."

To approach the histories of the thirty-four college women with the expectation of finding a more favorable indication of cultural influence, as it would seem reasonable to expect, is to court serious disappointment. These women are a cross section representative of the interaction of higher education and sexuality. They are of "notably good health, and average fertility, but on every count hesitant when it comes to love." This withdrawal from the sexual is largely on aesthetic grounds. The doctor says that an ordinary group of thirty-four patients selected at random would have come first for reasons of physical health, but twenty-one of these came first for consultation about sexual questions. Here is the appalling record of the group: "Of sexual adjustment in marriage, eleven had no complaint; of the others, eight were frigid, six had dyspareunia; three were maladjusted; two were separated; three intended to divorce; and one had a divorce. This makes the ratio of maladjustment twenty-three out of thirty-four, or two out of three."

Only twelve women gave data about coitus. Of

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these, two had had intercourse once in three months; two, once in five months; one, monthly; one for procreation only; the others from one to three times a week. In sixteen cases the wife had had orgasm; in fifteen cases she had had it rarely or never; for three no data were given.

The doctor says of these women that their sexual reluctance was the most impressive single detail. He remarks, "That only a third are adjusted in marriage and that six have come to separation or divorce may be a coincidence; but the sexual reluctance which winds through so many stories has distinct meaning." The fact that while of the 1,098 histories of sex life 37.5 per cent have sexual maladjustment at some period, of the group of 115 women of religious and higher education tradition 67.5 per cent are sexually reluctant, is certainly noteworthy. Dickinson is careful to say, "Nothing is proved by such small numbers as are here concerned, but it is significant that on assembling those who live under cultural taboo more arduous than the average, presents a higher degree of sexual maladjustment."

It is no time to talk of the breakdown of monogamous marriage so long as the cultural traditions, the



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educational processes and the social atmosphere of our time tend so definitely and so powerfully to twist and distort and negatively condition the mating instinct, not only in those years in youth when it becomes a conscious impelling life force but even in the earliest years of childhood when attitudes and life-patterns are taking form. It will be time enough to question the adaptability of the traditional marriage ideal to a modern world when our boasted scheme of education and religious culture will function to speed the feet of youth toward love's high goal with the wings of a free spirit instead of forging shackles upon their limbs.

Hopefully and in fairness we may say that since the great war and particularly during the past half dozen years a marked improvement in educational tendency in this respect has appeared. Parents everywhere are getting a new point of view; the younger parents particularly are manifesting earnest concern over these educational problems and are applying their intelligence to their solution. Some schools are gradually modifying their curricula so as to integrate education designed to aid in life adjustments and family

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life, in subjects in which such material naturally belongs. The colleges particularly have been making progress in this regard. A recent study of the status of sex education in the colleges made by the writer showed that of 111 institutions reporting, 105 were giving some measure of attention to teaching calculated to aid the student to orient himself in life in respect to the sex factor. To be sure, the picture is not so rosy as these figures would indicate. Most of such teaching is as yet extremely fragmentary and haphazard. Only 30 of the 105 institutions giving some attention to sex education could be rated as doing a reasonably adequate task. It is regrettable to find that the large institutions and particularly the large state universities are as yet most neglectful of this aspect of preparation for successful living.

In the field of religious education, too, there has appeared in quite recent years a rapid awakening to this need and responsibility, and means for the training of leaders to guide this aspect of the social education of the young are developing apace. The emphasis in religious education circles upon specific education for marriage is particularly heartening.

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Altogether we seem to be well on in at least the dawn of a better day, pointing toward the time when the compulsions of our culture in matters of sexual love will be toward positive, not negative results.

To youth approaching marriageable age it is pertinent to suggest that each individual put himself (or herself) through a rigid course of self-analysis, going back over the years of youth and of childhood as far as memory will serve, with a view to gathering up the sex impressions, incidents and experiences, and the whole general atmosphere that has been absorbed, and of bringing it all before the bar of reason in a modern light of truth. Attempt to diagnose and evaluate your real inner attitude toward sexual love and its passionate expression in marriage. If in a fair facing up to your inner feelings in these matters you become conscious of the restraining grip of unwholesome cultural compulsions, set about at once upon a course of self-reëducation, and see to it that you become thoroughly liberated from that grip before you join your chosen mate on the journey of life together—"for better or for worse." Starting with unfettered spirit it may be for the better, and ever better.

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### *Frigidity*

Most of the major factors in sex frustration which we have so far discussed spring into prominence and merge when we come to discuss frigidity, and none more so than the factor we have considered in the preceding section, namely, cultural compulsives.

Frigidity in women is commonly thought of as a congenital absence of sex desire or incapacity for sexual response. Such absolute frigidity, in which all the factors are invariably negative and the woman is definitely anaesthetic sexually, is rare. The condition we are discussing is rather one in which one or another factor, or usually a complex of factors, operate to block sexuality against fulfillment somewhere along its course. Dickinson's study of one hundred such cases is illuminating. The condition of frigidity was shown to be mainly an affair of the marriage. The husband's function was in question as well as the wife's. In nine-tenths of these cases, original sexual capacity and interest in the husband at some time were shown and some had had full sexual experience, but somewhere along the line the woman's sexual capacity was diverted to coldness and negation.

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Twenty-four of the wives said their marriage was happy, and forty-nine more indicated nothing contrary to happiness except the trouble with coitus. Eighteen stated they were unhappy, and nine more were presumed to be so by certain complaints of the wife. One-fourth of the total were then to be classed as unhappy.

Of their sexual relations the doctor says, "The characteristic coitus of these couples is brief and physiologically male, the female remaining passive and isolated. Once or twice a week there takes place, without preliminaries, an intromission lasting up to five minutes, at the end of which the husband has an orgasm and the wife does not. Both the man and the woman know that the woman has no animating desire. She submits without welcome to the embrace; it may occur without excitement and she expects it to terminate without orgasm. There is no other topic upon which a woman will talk with so much grief and bitterness."

In half of the fifty-three cases reporting, the orgasm was not experienced; twenty-four women had never experienced the climax; three had had it formerly but not now; twenty-one had had it some

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time and five rarely. Some had had orgasm in autoerotic practice, others had not known what it was.

Dickinson concludes that the term "frigid woman" is poetical exaggeration; that frigidity is better understood as sexual hesitation which takes some other than the expected course. He says, "It trails passion as concealed desire and is a manifestation not of the absence of sexuality but of its direction away from the primitive satisfaction goal of the sexual embrace. In this series there is no case in which desire has not begun."

We have presented these data not for the purpose of painting a gloomy picture of unhappy prospects in marital sex relations but for the contrary purpose of pointing out the possibility of solving these problems. There is nothing gained by dodging realities. If these conditions are to be prevented or corrected we need to be conscious of their existence, of their prevalence and of the factors and influence of which they are a consequence. If frigidity were an inborn state there would be nothing we could do about it with present knowledge. We have seen that the fault lies somewhere between the husband and the wife. They have lost the way from the beginning or somewhere along

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on their marital journey. A solution may come through mutual, coöperative application of intelligence, courage and effort to find the right way.

Whatever other factors may enter in—and there may be many remote and obscure ones not yet understood—it is perfectly obvious that in these cases the common factors of marital sex maladjustments which we have already discussed are all at work. There is common ignorance; want of understanding of one another's sexual constitutions and even of their own; a social heritage of compulsions and attitudes which in the woman dispose toward negation and in the man toward a low, self-centered order of sexuality; there is crude, unintelligent method which utterly fails the woman; there is quick emission; there is no knowledge of and hence no regard for woman's periodicity of desire; and finally there is complete ignorance of the art of love. There is neither prelude nor postlude and the whole technique throughout is comparable to a person with but the elements of music attempting to play a sonata on a violin with a rasp. Dickinson remarks that none of these records contain evidence of a husband who was a great lover.

The way of prevention is to be sought first, in

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clearing the chambers of the soul of the cobwebs and bats of inhibiting cultural traditions; second, in an adequate untrammelled knowledge of sex in life and how it may be made to contribute most richly to human happiness. The way of remedy demands a rigorous reëducation to the same end, plus patient, tolerant learning together of the art of loving, practised in accord with the essential constitution of their respective natures. There is no royal road to the goal but a royal reward awaits those who reach the goal.

### *Dyspareunia*

Dyspareunia is the technical term for painful coitus. In general it is in effect but another form of frigidity. The frigid woman expresses her aversion or rebellion in coldness, the woman with dyspareunia expresses them in pain. A difference between the two groups is that the latter insists on a physical cause. (Dyspareunia is to be distinguished from vaginismus which is a condition of muscular spasm of the vagina which obstructs or prevents male entry.)

In the Dickinson-Beam study, there were selected from the case records 175 cases of painful coitus for



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special study. In the introductory summary of the chapter on the subject it is said, "Pain to the wife in coitus appears as a form of frigidity among patients of the established social type, of ordinary health and marital condition. This condition may last for years and is characterized by low fertility and impoverished love life, yet it is impossible to establish physical cause in nearly half the cases. The remaining couples, including the married virgins, live on the emotional level of a psychic handicap accepted by both. Pain is endured for a long time before seeking relief. Cure of the pain is usual but not the return of enthusiasm. The cases illustrate both physical and psychic dyspareunia, with varying cause, circumstances and effect."

It was found that these women brought to marriage the usual history of shocks and inhibitions. The sexual impulse in themselves was asserted in about the same proportion as in the entire thousand cases, as was also self-experimentation. Nearly half of the group admitted occasional auto-erotism, and thirty more who denied it showed the characteristic signs. Of the seventy cases who claimed dyspareunia throughout the entire marriage period, eleven gave accounts of

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repulsion on the bridal night and as many more spoke of painful and distasteful beginnings.

The wife's attitude in coitus was recorded as positive pleasure in twenty-one cases, indifference in forty-eight cases, and various grades of distaste and fear in thirty-six cases. This means that but one woman in five was pleased in sexual intercourse.

After presenting the full data about this group of women the doctor says of them, "These data about sexuality have a familiar aspect. They are quite parallel with the data about frigidity and other forms of the negative attitude. Except as pain for physical reasons can be shown, we are dealing in these 175 cases only with a specialized form of frigidity."

According to this group the possibility of complete cure is not impressive. Twenty-three women were not cured of sensitiveness, sixty-four stopped having pain but remained without pleasure, fourteen afterward discovered an active sexual life with climax and seventy-four were not followed up.

The writer wishes to observe that the lack of more favorable results as to sexuality in these cases raises the question how far, along with the treatment given by the physician, there was brought about an im-

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provement in the general situation which impelled these possibly predisposed women toward sexual negation. It is clear that all of the common factors which tend toward maladjustment and negation which we noted in relation to frigidity had been at work in these cases also. Aside from other than sexual factors it is readily understood that so long as prudish attitudes, fears, shocks, ignorance, premature ejaculation, too brief intromission, want of emotional prelude and the rest continue operative, no better results can be expected. In addition to what the physician may do, the situation requires a rather radical re-education and readjustment in the interactions of the mates in the sphere of their sexual life, a radical change in attitudes, personal relationship and techniques. One woman gave the clue in the remark, "The hurt of the first night disgusted me; he never tried to make me like it." The real problem is to make her like it. The capacity is there but the total situation blocks it of fulfillment. Can it be released? The answer probably is that once this sort of situation has become set in an accepted mold, a radical improvement is in most cases difficult.

It is for this reason that the emphasis is to be

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placed upon prevention. This is the purpose with which this book is primarily concerned. The solution of these difficulties must come *before* marriage through a background of knowledge, understanding, insight, appreciation such as will normalize attitudes and thoroughly equip men and women before and after the wedding so to adjust, develop and harmonize their sexual capacities and needs as to make for happy fellowship and mutual satisfaction. In the last analysis the extent of frigidity and dyspareunia are a terrible reflection upon our education and social training.

### *Fear*

While the problem of fear is of profound importance in a study of human sexuality, it is not our purpose to attempt a detailed analysis and discussion of the subject in this book.<sup>1</sup> It is a complex subject. Sexual fears cannot be isolated from life as a whole. They are usually an expression of a generally fearful attitude toward life. The women who list their sexual fears also have miscellaneous fears: of animals, the dark, burglars, noise, machinery, poison in food, sin,

<sup>1</sup> An analysis of the subject as related to Dr. Dickinson's case studies will be found in a chapter on Fear in his book, *A Thousand Marriages*.

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punishment, strange men, etc., etc. It indicates that in those persons in whom fear is a factor in sex frustration the problem needs to be approached from a broader base than the sexual alone.

We have already shown that while in certain proportion sexual fears in marriage have their origin in marital experience, in the main such fears trace back to cultural taboo and to earlier shocking experiences often reënforced by unpleasant experiences in marriage. The fundamental attack upon the problem must come by way of a more sane education and social culture. For every man and woman approaching marriage it becomes a task of self-analysis and reëducation. From an immediately practical point of view, this is where emphasis must be placed. Nothing paralyzes sexual capacities and powers more completely and more quickly than fear. The fearful man cannot get or sustain erection; the fearful woman cannot respond. Success in these respects requires assurance, confidence, poise. As has been already shown, an attitude of fear means not merely frustration of the immediate act but a tendency to ultimate fixing of the personality in sexual negation.

The particular fear to which we wish here to give

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consideration is the fear of pregnancy. This is a question which every couple must face intelligently and resolutely. If marital happiness and health are to be assured, the fear of pregnancy must not be allowed to hang as a sword suspended by a thread over the marital bed, at such times when pregnancy definitely does not fit into the life scheme of the couple. This naturally raises the question of contraceptive measures.

It is not the purpose of the writer to persuade any one for or against the use of contraceptives for the purpose of regulating or limiting procreation. It is a question for each couple to settle in harmony with their own consciences and situation. We are insisting, however, that in the interest of marital success and happiness the question must be faced and settled, and that failure to do so is cowardly, and if failure to face it is on the part of one or the other of the mates in inconsideration of the other, it is unfair. Our personal views are that for reasoning human beings in an age of supposed advanced culture every aspect of life that is not beyond volitional control should be brought under intelligent direction and control and not left to the play of haphazard influences. Certainly this applies to so fundamental and vital a human interest and function

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as the begetting of children. What we would stress, however, is intelligent *regulation* of procreation, not its avoidance. There is as much need for stressing both the personal and social importance and advantages of having children as there is of stressing the evils to the family and society of excessive and unregulated bearing of children. Those who deliberately avoid having any children at all need to be helped to understand and appreciate the fact that they are thereby blocking for themselves one of the highways of life toward self-realization and full, rich living. No compensation can wholly make up for this loss. The one-child family needs to be made to realize that by this limitation they are placing upon this child one of the greatest of handicaps to personal and social development, and to effectiveness and successful adjustment in his world. Any sane movement for "birth control" should be a movement for rational parenthood which works in both directions. While for some the limitation of offspring enters into the question, it is primarily one of so regulating child-bearing that every child shall come when welcome and when conditions are favorable for all concerned. This is the human as against the animal way.

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A summary of the facts as to the prevalence of the use of contraceptive measures among couples of what is commonly called "the better class of society," as shown in comparatively recent studies, will be of interest to those who must consider this question.

Of the Davis group of 1,000 married women, 730 employed contraceptive measures. Omitting those who were sterile, this would mean 85 per cent of the fertile. It is of interest to note that the group which used such measures had a higher average of pregnancies and of children than the group which did not use them. In Hamilton's study of one hundred married men and one hundred married women, ninety-two of the men and eighty-seven of the women state that contraceptive measures are used.

Dickinson says of his one thousand marriages, "The hypothesis is that in this series birth is usually controlled. This is safe to assume because it was true in the great majority of cases where the question of contraceptives was raised. . . . Such cases afford 532 instances of information as to how fertility was or was not controlled. Only twenty-five or fewer than one in twenty, had never used any form of control. In 507 cases some form was used, or was unnecessary because



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of sterility or sterilization." The records date back, many of them, to times when much less was known about control.

It is seen from these data that while the propriety and ethics of contraceptive measures are still being vigorously debated in various circles, often with much more heat than light, and while the different organized religious bodies make the question an issue in their conventions, the great majority of the middle and upper strata of society are actually making use of contraceptive means. The truth seems to be that common sense leads most couples sooner or later to resort to contraceptives in order to make child-bearing fit into an ordered family scheme even while they may retain mental uncertainty or reservations about the propriety or ethics of doing so. Such mental uncertainty is unfortunate for it necessarily partakes of the nature of fear and tends to inhibit sexual response and foster disharmony. While common sense dictates intelligent regulation, organized opposition which makes the question one of social ethics and of religious sanctions, serves to keep the consciences of many tender on the matter and to engender mental conflict. From the point of view of its bearing upon happily adjusted

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marriage, every couple needs to think the matter through to a conclusion, one way or the other, which will eliminate such conflict. Whatever the way out may be for any couple, it is of great importance that fear of pregnancy be reduced to the minimum, if not wholly excluded in marriage.

It is not the purpose of this book to discuss methods of contraception. We must, however, deal in no uncertain terms with a method commonly used by husbands, namely, "withdrawal," because it strikes at the very heart of the problem of equal, mutually satisfying sex relations which we have been stressing. "Withdrawal" means that the sex act goes to the point at which the man's orgasm has begun, then the male organ is withdrawn from the vagina before ejaculation of the semen occurs, and his orgasm is completed outside. This is, of course, in very many cases, an entirely one-sided, male performance. It often means that the wife does not achieve orgasm, and is aroused but little if at all because fear of pregnancy overhangs the act, and she must take for granted at the outset that she will not participate. While on the part of the husband this method may be used in consideration of the wife so far as pregnancy is concerned, it is in utter incon-

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sideration of her sexual pleasure and needs unless he can wait until she reaches orgasm before his exit, which is a rare accomplishment. Ignorance or selfishness or both generally rule where this method is commonly employed. If contraceptive measures need to be resorted to, the couple with a reasonable degree of intelligence may be expected to have the foresight, initiative and consideration to familiarize themselves with contraceptive measures that will make it possible for the wife to be a free and successful participant in coitus, and measures far more likely to prove successful as a preventive than withdrawal can usually be. Scarcely any method fails more frequently. The man's pleasure in the act in which withdrawal is resorted to requires that he shall not withdraw until the extreme possible moment before ejaculation. In this attempted timing and control many slips occur.

The prevalence of this unsatisfactory method of contraception is an index of the dominance of the male point of view in marital sexuality. From the point of view of mutual sharing and harmony, as also of effectiveness, it must be questioned.

Another point bearing on the use of contraceptives needs mention. The successful and most satisfying

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management of the act of coitus requires undivided attention from the beginning of love-play to the completion of the act. Any diversion is inhibiting, if not fatal, to a successful conclusion. We have already suggested that sexual intercourse should not be made too largely a matter of regularized routine but should follow upon mutual desire arising out of the general affectional relationship of the mates. When desire has arisen in such ways and both partners have become stimulated to the point of readiness for coitus, it often becomes exasperatingly distracting or completely inhibiting to have to go about making preparation for contraceptive measures. This is particularly true for men who have difficulty in securing or sustaining erection. This naturally leads to the suggestion that among the various methods considered effective those be chosen which require the minimum of "fussing," and that the means required be kept most conveniently at hand. Some women have solved the problem by making preparation as a part of their toilet for the night whether intercourse be anticipated or not.

In reference to choice of contraceptive means it is important to be warned against depending upon friends or acquaintances for information, even though

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they may claim to have received the advice from a physician. Such dependence upon hearsay information results in the widespread use of measures which are unreliable and harmful. Advice as to choice of means and specific instruction as to their use should be secured from reputable physicians, preferably specialists in this field.

### *Premarital Sex Experience*

Young men have often contended that premarital sex experience on the part of men is desirable in that it is of value in achieving successful sexual relationships in marriage. With the growing "emancipation" movement among women the same question has been raised increasingly as relating to them. The question deserves to be scrutinized with some care. We are not here concerned with the moral aspects of the matter but only with the possible bearing of such experience upon satisfactory marital adjustment. On the face of it, it would seem that logic favors those who assert this view. Does experience support logic on this point?

There is no question that in some cases experience in sex relations has been of service in working out a suc-

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cessful relationship after marriage. On the whole, however, the facts seem to be against it. This is easily appreciated when we consider how very different is the relationship and the conditions of intercourse in sex relations between a man and a promiscuous woman or prostitute from the relationship and the conditions that obtain in coitus with a wife whom he loves. In marital sex relations approaching even remotely the ideal, the act is the most intimate expression of the affections, of love passionately expressed. Aside from any procreative purpose, that is its meaning and its justification in marriage. It involves regard for personality, unselfish seeking of the highest satisfaction and happiness of the mate more than one's own, or rather of finding the fullest personal satisfaction in the happiness and fullness of the love experience of the partner. It means the fullest and most harmonious physical and emotional interplay of the two personalities, all to the same end of mutual satisfaction and happiness. It means the study and exercise of the delicate and skillful art of loving. It involves an artful prelude of love.

In sexual intercourse of a man with a promiscuous woman the relationship and the conditions are almost

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completely reversed. Affection, regard for personality and unselfish consideration for the experience of the woman, except as consideration of her may enhance his own pleasure, are either wholly absent or reduced to low or the lowest terms. The experience is essentially self-centered, and mainly on a physical level. There is no need to study or to practice any skillful art of loving, no need for emotional prelude. Crude technique which serves the purpose of intercourse in such relations is all that is expected and, for the most part, practiced. Excess, too, is the rule. The man who spends a night or an hour with a promiscuous woman purposes to get all he can out of it. To see "how many times I can stay with the woman" is a common expression of such men. Having gained their conception and experience of sex relations in such connections and on such a plane, the tendency is to carry over into marriage the atmosphere, attitudes, ideas, technique and habits thus acquired, with the result that they mess up the whole situation. Unquestionably the crudities, the selfishness and the excesses which so largely shock and freeze women into frigidity have a source in premarital experience of this type.

Premarital sex experience among acquaintances and

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friends who are not necessarily promiscuous is not to be considered in the same class with those just discussed. In the main, however, they differ from them in degree rather than in kind. For the most part such relations are self-seeking and self-regarding only in lesser degree. Statistics of such experiences indicate less favorable results from them than might be expected. A mutual understanding of one another's sexual make-up, and of their own, on the part of lovers; a knowledge of the physiological and psychological elements that enter in; and a theoretical insight into the kind and quality of technique required, as a background and basis for mutual adaptation in marriage, seem to serve as a more reliable equipment for happy marriage than premarital sex experience. There is a wide range for mutual adaptation and adjustment in marriage provided there is understanding and the spirit and will to adjust.

Certain data in Hamilton's study are significant on the matter under discussion. He correlated premarital sex experience with degree of satisfaction in marriage. In both the men and the women it was found that a significantly higher percentage of those who were virgin at marriage had a "fair to high degree



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of satisfaction" in marriage than did those who had had premarital sex experience. These data seem to point to the probability at least that premarital sex experience is weighted against rather than for advantage in promoting happy adjustment in marriage.

So far as women are concerned there is another important consideration. We have noted the difference between men and women in response to sex stimuli. On the whole women are protected by nature much more than men are against quick and easy arousal of specific sex desire and passion. This difference gives rise to much misunderstanding between engaged couples. Until sex arousal of the woman has gone beyond a certain point the man has a more difficult problem of control. What with him tends easily to become physical passion may long remain in her case a generalized glow of love. Each, however, is prone to assume that the experience of the partner is identical with his or her own. When, therefore, the passionate ardor of the man becomes manifest to the woman, she may hold him in disrespect as being "animal." He, assuming that the woman shares his experience, is prone to act accordingly and thereby complicate the misunderstanding.

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The point we are coming to, however, is the fact that once a woman has been fully aroused and has experienced the culmination of the sex relation, she can never be the same woman again. If her marriage does not follow, her problem now approaches that of the man. Dunlap says, "After the psychological life of the woman has been once developed, she is a different person, and her personal problems, previously rather simple, become much more like those of the man. The woman, therefore, who achieves her sex education without marriage is in a peculiarly unfortunate position, a prey not only to the enormous force which has been liberated in her life, but a prey also to the large group of males who constantly seek to play upon these forces. The attitude which men frequently take toward the inexperienced woman, namely, that the responsibility for her actions rests upon her alone, if she consents to sex relations, can therefore have no palliation except on the assumption that such men are densely ignorant of the psychology of woman, and the fact is that in few cases can she possibly know beforehand the consequences of the step which she may contemplate. It is not necessary to assume anything essentially wrong in sex experience, or even in promiscuity; the

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serious ethical problem grows out of the psychological facts, together with the fixed definite conventions of the social system from which no individual can escape.

“On the other hand, the more fully the woman or girl understands this situation, the more capable she is of protecting herself. Knowing that once having entered upon a new realm of experience, no return to the former security is possible, and that the complexities of the new life are such that she cannot evaluate them in advance; and that society is so organized that woman is put at every possible disadvantage in dealing with these complexities; she is not apt to entertain lightly an experimental attitude. Further, the young woman should know the awakening of her sex desire is a smoothly progressive process, beginning in details that may seem to her not in the least dangerous, but grading by small steps to a culmination in which she has no further control; and that she cannot foresee the point at which control will be lost.”

## CHAPTER VI

### *FACTORS IN IDEAL MARRIAGE*



## CHAPTER VI

### *FACTORS IN IDEAL MARRIAGE*

HAVING considered the more important factors which contribute to sexual maladjustments in marriage, we shall now reverse the slate and look at marriage from the positive point of view. What factors contribute to successful, happily adjusted marriage? The obvious implications of the foregoing discussion will have answered the question in a measure. We believe, however, that a certain degree of repetition and reiteration will be of advantage.

It is our purpose to ground the discussion as solidly as possible, not upon theory but upon the facts of human nature, so far as we know them, and upon experience. For a number of years the writer has focussed observation upon the successful marriages rather than the maladjusted and the failures, for two reasons: He found an increasing number of the modern young people, especially young women, say something like this; "I am afraid of marriage. I look about among my acquaintances and friends and I do not find any of them making a go of it, not the kind that would suit

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me. If that is what marriage means, none of it for me!" This was disturbing if true. The writer sat down with pencil and paper and let his mind roam over his rather large circle of acquaintances and friends, jotting down those marriages which from intimate knowledge he could rate in high degree of success. He sought out mainly couples who had reached at least middle life and hence had demonstrated the wearing qualities of their marital relationships. This exercise proved to be most heartening. While the highly successful marriages were proportionately all too few among those that could be termed "adjusted," there was nevertheless a fair proportion which had justified the high hopes with which every normal couple makes the venture, and among these not a few which represented marriage at its best—couples in the sixties and seventies who were lovers more genuinely and firmly than they could have been in the days of glowing youth; a love that had never lost its romance; a companionship which had not ceased its growth, which had become sweeter, broader, deeper and more serene with the passing years; a personal relationship which furnished the conditions for the fullest development of the self of each of the mates; a fellowship which

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forced the very hardships of life to contribute to a deeper harmony and a firmer spiritual bond. The writer felt that so long as there were so many of such examples of what marriage may become, there is no need to be unduly pessimistic about marriage. The tragedy of the situation is that many, many more who did not reach those levels might well have done so had society, which impels them to marriage either blindfold or with distorted vision, guided their steps—and their heads and hearts—in the path where success may best be achieved.

A higher rate of dissatisfaction among young married couples today, if true, is not altogether an unmitigated evil. Certainly one factor is that they expect and demand more of marriage than their parents and grandparents have expected and demanded. Upon the whole they enter upon marriage with a higher ideal. On the other hand, they are not much better equipped to attain that higher satisfaction and ideal than their predecessors were. We are going through a period of tremendous and rapid transition in all human relationships and in none so great as in the relationships of the sexes. There is profound need of throwing more light upon this tortuous and difficult path.



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A second reason for searching out the highly successful marriages was the plain fact that they need searching out. The smoothly going, happily adjusted, highly satisfactory marriages do not obtrude themselves upon public attention. They are not news. They have no sensational or dramatic quality. They are not food for tabloids. It is not about them that the stage, the screen and the novelist build their plots. No, it is the marriages in which there is conflict, maladjustment, clash, cruelty, suffering, unfaithfulness, desertion and the like that hold the stage and come to the public eye. These facts tend to give a distorted perspective of the marriage situation.

The positive factors which we shall discuss are essentially those which are found to have played their part in known highly successful and happy marriages.

### *The Marriage Ideal*

A requirement for marriage at its best is a correct conception and a true appreciation of the marriage ideal. What in reality is marriage? Is it a legal bond? a contract? a social institution? a business partnership?

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or an association for legalized cohabitation? All of these may enter in but they represent marriage only in a legal or conventional sense. They represent the social sanctions of marriage, and social sanctions are needed, for society has a tremendous stake in marriage. But essentially, marriage is a personal relationship, a mutual psychologic state, a spiritual bond. The stamp of legal and social approval alone cannot really marry two people. They can become truly married only as a result of a psychological process between them which unites them in a personal relationship which makes possible a growing companionship in which each may progressively find life's richest fulfillment. Marriages have come about by various procedures and from a variety of motives. Many have been arranged by parents without choice on the part of the couple, and many of these have proven successful. Many have taken place from motives of economic security, to escape the stigma of old maid or old bachelor or what not, and many of such have turned out successfully. But whenever a marriage has come to have spiritual significance it has been because the parties arrived at a psychological union of the two personalities, at a personal relationship which essentially is marriage. Harris says, "At

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its best, marriage is a personal partnership of love and esteem."

It is the observance by young people of the lack of this creative companionship in so many marriages more than any other thing that makes them question marriage. The adolescent youth senses instinctively that the deepest yearnings of life are to find their completest satisfaction and fulfillment in union and companionship with a mate. But youth today is disposed to view this ideal against a background of reality. They learn that in the United States there occurs now one <sup>1</sup> divorce to about every six marriages; it is obvious to them that a much larger proportion continue to live together in the same maladjustments which lead others to separation and divorce; they observe particularly that a still larger proportion of the rank and file of marriages which society views as successful, in the absence of apparent disruptive elements, achieves no more than a commonplace, bread-and-butter relationship, bereft of spiritual significance and beauty. Unfortunately they tend to stop here and fail to note and to study that upper level of marriages in which lovers

<sup>1</sup> This must not be taken to mean that one out of every six marriages will fail. This no one knows. Obviously the divorces which occur are, many of them, of marriages which took place many years ago.

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have become genuinely married psychologically, spiritually; in which an intimate companionship makes all the great values of life the richer because of the sharing; which has made marriage truly "the great adventure" and fulfilled and often surpassed the adolescent ideal and dream.

Harris says,<sup>1</sup> "The future of monogamous marriage depends upon the degree to which we can bring ourselves to appreciate it as a personal relationship and to address ourselves to the genuine personal problems involved. The State, the Church, and even the Home seemingly have been content as long as the external decencies have been observed: the splendid possibilities of creative companionship have been shamelessly neglected. The present-day demands for more freedom, for easier divorce, for trial marriage are not necessarily symptoms of depravity. A sympathetic view discerns in them the protest against a conventional conception of marriage which persists in regarding it simply as a social institution and studiously disregards or minimizes the human interests involved. . . . The whole possibility of a deeper experience in the future lies within the area of the personal relation-

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Marriage.*

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ship; and that relationship will never be explored adequately until it is pressed upon the understanding of humanity that there is no stability for the contract unless there is achieved a reasonable adjustment between the persons concerned." Lichtenberger says,<sup>1</sup> "One of the most dominant demands among emergent attitudes is that mutual happiness shall be recognized as the most essential condition of marriage. It is being insisted that love is the essence of true marriage and the prerequisite which renders the fulfillment of any other function either possible or desirable." He observes further, "Modern divorce, because of its frequency, is often referred to as a 'revolt against marriage.' Since marriages are not diminishing, the suggestion at once arises that the 'revolt' must be due to causes which arise after marriages have been entered into, and to conditions which could not have been foreseen. This would imply a conflict between present ideals and their realization in experience." The vision of the new generation which is discerning more clearly what must be the primary and fundamental object of marriage, namely, a personal relationship which has something of high value peculiar to itself to contribute

<sup>1</sup> *Divorce*, J. P. Lichtenberger.

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to personal development and happiness, gives hope of increasing the proportion of marriages which attain the higher altitudes of creative companionship and happiness and of materially raising the whole average level of marriages. The issue is stated in the words of Harris, "Circumstances are remorseless. They have forced us to face the plain truth that an ill-adjusted personal relationship in marriage falls apart no matter what legal, social or religious support is brought to its aid, while a satisfactory partnership seems so easily to resist all assaults made upon it that sometimes death itself is powerless to dissolve it."

It will be readily seen that psychologic marriage, marriage as a creative personal relationship, is *an achievement* between mates and is not necessarily entered into at the wedding; indeed it seldom is. In most cases the wedding is but the point of departure toward marriage, a setting of the feet on the road toward that vital relationship which essentially is marriage. Some arrive quickly at this first goal which joins them in unity of spirit, preparing them to set out further upon the adventurous quest. Others must travel for varying periods of time before they reach that marriage milestone, and how many there are who tramp that road

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together for years, and have their children, but never arrive at marriage in any true sense!

Marriage is not only an achievement; it is a difficult achievement. It means nothing less than a harmonious adjustment of two different personalities—the most complex creations in the universe. It requires intelligent study, devoted application, and rigid self-discipline. No couple can safely expect to drift into an ideal marriage relationship. The currents are apt to smash their ship upon the rocks.

We have in this book dwelt upon the fundamental character of the sex factor in happily adjusted marriage. But beyond and beneath all that, the personal relationship is primary. While an ill-adjusted sex relationship will certainly prove the greatest of hindrances to the achieving or sustaining of a creative, personal companionship, a permanently satisfying sex relationship is not likely to be attained or sustained without the spiritual unity which is the essence of that personal relationship.

### *Choice of Mate*

No subject discussed in this book is deserving of greater emphasis than the subject of mate choice. The

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unintelligent, impulsive, emotional basis upon which so many marriages are entered into result in combinations of personalities which render maladjustment or failure a foregone conclusion. We have said that successful marriage is a difficult achievement. It involves an endless process of adjustment between two different personalities.<sup>1</sup> Whatever else may enter into an abidingly happy marriage, there must be first of all a reasonable harmony of character qualities, such a degree of compatibility of the two personalities as will make possible the mutual adjustment necessary for a satisfying companionship. During courtship and engagement lovers are prone to keep the best foot forward; to display chiefly the more agreeable sides of their natures. In marriage they must meet life together, not alone on the mountain tops of inspiration and in its shady dells of peace but in the hard, wearing grind of a work-a-day world. They must meet life day in and day out under conditions that bring out the angles and unlovely sides of their natures. Then will come the test as to whether their natures are compatible to a degree that love may build a supporting and in-

<sup>1</sup> Some of the material in this section is an enlargement upon an article by the writer, "Education for Marriage," published in the *Journal of Social Hygiene*, Vol. No. 4, April, 1930.



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spiring companionship upon these very irritations and hardships of life and lift their marriage relation above them, or whether their natures will clash in a way to turn love anaemic and eventually cause its death. Lichtenberger remarks,<sup>1</sup> "The glamorous halo which surrounds courtship makes it difficult for lovers to discover or to disclose their true selves, or to appraise qualities in each other which under the greater intimacies of married life would possess enduring charm or which would tend to mar endearing companionship. Hence the disillusionment which often follows marriage."

A fine example of frankly facing up to this situation on the part of a pair of lovers came to the writer's attention not long ago. They were deeply and genuinely in love. They had many interests in common—literary, artistic, musical, and the love of nature. Their tastes in these things harmonized well. "An ideal combination for a happy, enduring marriage," most observers would have said. Yet these lovers, while often thrilled to the depths in their association together, found their companionship marred by a fundamental antagonism they found difficult to pin down or define.

<sup>1</sup> *Divorce.*

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In him was an inherent self-centeredness and lack of delicate considerateness, while she reacted with peculiar sensitiveness to such traits. They found they did not naturally entrust their confidences to one another. There was an ill-defined but effective wall between them at points where love requires freedom and mutuality.

These young people were intelligent and courageous, and their ideals of marriage were too high to run the risk of mismating. They did not let their hearts run away with their heads. They talked the matter through frankly and sympathetically, and agreed that it was not best for them to marry. The ordeal cost heart wrenching and tears, but their ultimate happiness was at stake and the price was not too great to pay.

Genuine, mutual love as a first requirement for successful marriage is generally taken for granted. Its importance in the marriage ideal has already been stressed. Where young people need help is in discriminating between what is genuine and what is spurious in love. Physical attraction and harmony between mates is indispensable, let there be no mistake about that. Marriage rests upon that biological base.

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But physical attraction alone, however thrilling and breath-taking it may be, is not enough. Such attraction, unsupported by the finer spiritual elements of love can in a year, a month, turn to satiety, indifference, disgust. Genuine love is an affectionate response to the whole personality of the loved one, a response infused with utmost respect and abiding confidence. Love requires the test of time in the midst of the varied exigencies of life to distinguish the genuine from the spurious. That discrimination needs to be made before marriage.

But even love of the more genuine kind does not necessarily assure happiness. There must be at bottom such a degree of compatibility of the two personalities as will not foredoom marriage to failure but make possible a harmonious adjustment. We must guard against expecting perfection here. Human nature at best has many weaknesses. Fortunately, when supported by a genuine, unselfish affection, and an appreciation of what is involved, and a will to adjust, it has also great capacities for adjustment. We are not arguing for perfection as a requirement for marriage but for an intelligent discrimination which will rightly evaluate the possibilities. It needs to be

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urged that such intellectual evaluation needs to come before the emotions have become so deeply involved that judgment becomes hopelessly unreliable. The choice of a mate requires at best a judicious mixture of discriminating intelligence with emotion.

It is not our purpose to discuss in detail the considerations that enter into wise mate choice. A full treatment would require writing a book on the subject and such books have been written. We shall confine ourselves to brief mention of a few more essentials.

### *Sound Health*

All of life is limited by the functioning of the physical mechanism, the marriage relationship not excepted. From every point of view it calls for a reasonable degree of constitutional vigor. Occasional, and from time to time, serious illness is to be expected. Where there is a harmonious affectionate relationship such times will serve only to deepen that affection and call out the reserves of unselfish devotion and sacrifice. But a persistently ailing or constitutionally neurotic husband or wife is almost certain to prove a formidable obstacle to a perma-

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nently happy and adjusted marriage. General lack of health and vigor is prone to affect sexual harmony adversely, to limit the marriage relationship in all other respects, and to render sustained temperamental harmony unusually difficult. We have in literature and in experience those rare examples of building an exquisite structure of life-long affectionate devotion upon the physical frailties of one of the mates. We do them honor and hold them in highest respect, but the significant thing is that they are so rare. Successful marriage, as all of life, requires a sound physical base. It is important to face this question not only as a matter of the apparent health of the individual but in the light of the inherited constitutional vigor of the family for at least two generations.

### *Compatibility of Temperament*

The unhappy group of wives in Dr. Davis' study listed twenty-three reasons for marital unhappiness. Incompatibility of temperament or interests stands at the head of the list as the most frequently mentioned, being about 30 per cent of the total. Lichtenberger says, "There are temperaments or dispositions which

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are organically incompatible and which under the strain of domesticity become morbidly antagonistic." Temperaments need to be tested out before marriage, not alone in the parlor when lovers are on their best behavior but under trying situations such as will be met together in married life. A fishing or camping expedition surprised by rain and fog, with leaking tent, cold wind, wet fire-wood, and the fish not biting—such conditions are likely to furnish a more reliable test of temperamental poise.

Here too we must not expect too much. Harmony of temperaments need not be perfect. It rarely is. But there must be compatibility to a degree that, coupled with intelligence, sympathy and the will to adjust, will make possible a harmonious relationship. Serious clashing of temperaments before marriage is a warning to be earnestly heeded. The test in marriage comes not usually over big issues but in life's nagging daily routine. As Harris puts it, "The strain of married life is serious: it is no picnic. After all, it is not perhaps the 'great difficulties' that cause most of the trouble; it is the constant rub of what we have foolishly called little things occurring every day that stir up the permanent irritations."

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### *A Community of Interests*

The heart of the personal relationship is the sharing of interests common to both partners. For a sustained and growing companionship it is imperative that the mates have enough interests they can share, enough things they enjoy doing together, to furnish material for companionship to feed upon. A lack of common interests will tend to drift lovers apart or sink their relationship to commonplace, drab levels.

This does not mean, as is often supposed, that in the marital partnership all of life is to be shared. Actually the proportion of their daily interests and activities which most husbands and wives share is quite limited. Harris says, "Even under the best of circumstances there are ranges of experience which are not shared between husband and wife and some few perhaps which never can be shared." He suggests that the partnership as such comprises those interests which are shared by husband and wife, and its success generally depends upon the degree to which those shared interests are satisfying to both. "One may suspect that the marital relationship between a man and a woman becomes more and more successful

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as the number of shared interests steadily increases.” On this point Walter Lippmann says,<sup>1</sup> “Lovers who have nothing to do but love each other are not really to be envied; love and nothing else very soon is nothing else. The emotion of love, in spite of the romantics, is not self-sustaining; it endures only when the lovers love many things together, and not merely each other. It is this understanding that love cannot successfully be isolated from the business of living which is the enduring wisdom of the institution of marriage.”

An all too common experience is for couples to drift apart because the one grows while the other stagnates. Such a calamity is forestalled in a relationship in which the mates have congenial interests to share, in which the habit of sharing is mutual and in which from time to time the partners extend their interests and their sharing into new fields

### *Harmony of Tastes and Desires*

What we want and what pleases us is much more important than what we know, for we are governed

<sup>1</sup> *A Preface to Morals.*



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more by our desires and our tastes than we are by our knowledge. Clashes in tastes are more serious than intellectual differences. The sparring of wits and opposing views in the realm of intellect, when held with open mind and a tolerant spirit, may serve to sustain and enhance the vitality and stimulating value of the marital companionship. But a serious clashing of tastes and desires is threatening. It tends to limit companionship and is likely to become a serious strain in the marriage relationship. A wide range of common interests coupled with agreement in tastes in these interests presents a large and fascinating world for married lovers to explore together and in which to grow together.

### *Harmony in Habits*

Human beings are creatures of habit. By the age of twenty-five our habits of life are pretty well rooted. Let not lovers be deceived into believing that they can radically make one another over in their habits. Let them rather make sure before marriage that their respective habits are such that their capacity to adjust themselves to one another in this respect will be

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equal to the task. There is probably no area of the marital relationship in which friction is more likely to arise than the area of their habits. For example, a neat housewife who is annoyed by disorder and a careless, slovenly husband, are certain to try one another's patience severely. Many divorces trace back to such sources.

### *Harmony of Character Qualities*

We need not attempt to define too specifically but we have in mind such qualities as honesty, integrity, dependability, initiative, courage, loyalty, unselfishness, considerateness and others that go to make up the composite of a worthy, attractive character. Neither of the partners must expect perfection in the other. Rather must each let a wholesome consciousness of his or her own human weaknesses develop a growing sympathy and tolerance toward the weaknesses of the home partner. But it is imperative to continued happiness and progress in companionship that the character elements of the respective partners be such as to sustain the full respect, admiration and loyalty of the mate. Love and inspiring companionship must

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rest fundamentally upon a solid basis of respect and confidence.

A pertinent summing up of the above discussion of mate choice is found in the words of Lichtenberger,<sup>1</sup> "Fortunate nuptials are the point of departure for successful marriage and not its realization. For this latter purpose there is required temperamental adaptability, intellectual affinity, kindred tastes, parallel personal development, agreeable companionship, mutual forbearance, cultural similarities, community of interests, common objectives, and other like conditions.

"This is not to say that a married couple must go through life like a pair of Siamese twins, nor does compatibility involve identity. Qualities may be complementary or supplementary as the very condition of their congeniality, but they cannot be irreconcilably combative if marriage is to endure."

We have discussed sketchily the bases for harmony in respect to certain important qualities of personality and character which must be weighed with care in mate choice. They represent a series of fundamental adjustments to be made in marriage, each in itself

<sup>1</sup> *Divorce*.

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more or less formidable according to the degree of balance between the mates with regard to it. Studies of marital experience increasingly show that when the sex relationship is soundly adjusted there is good prospect of making the other adjustments also, provided, of course, there is underneath a personal relationship of genuine affection and equality; but that with serious maladjustment in the sexual area, there is slim chance of making a satisfying adjustment in these other respects.

### *Engagement*

Courtship leading up to engagement is the chief period of exploring, discovering and testing, each with reference to himself or herself, to the other party, and to the combination of the personality traits of the two. This is the period in which there needs to be not only a judicious mixture of intelligence and emotion but a dominance of the intellectual critical faculty, exercised particularly at those times when the emotions are most fully in abeyance. All the elements which enter into mate choice need to be frankly and fairly weighed in the full consciousness that vital

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choice is involved upon which hinges life's happiness. It is important that the companionship of the courting period embrace in its exercise a wide range of interests, activities and situations best calculated to reveal the personality and character qualities of the lovers. It is a time of testing not only the reactions and responses of the other party but of one's own reactions to one's companion. The couple cited which did not find the courting test favorable and agreed to accept the adverse verdict is an excellent example. One's discoveries need constantly to be projected against the background of the marriage situation with the question, how will we wear in the daily grind?

The question mark over the prospective marriage should not be wholly effaced when engagement has been entered upon. The lovers should not allow themselves or one another to regard the relationship as being one "as good as married" or as being an irrevocable commitment. It is best that it continue to remain one of exploration and testing so that in case either one should in the end be led to conclude that marriage would be unwise, no breach of good faith would be involved. Engagement usually and quite properly opens up new areas of intimacy and com-

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radeship which render the exploration more searching and revealing, and hence new discovery and new balancing of possibilities may bring a change of view and of regard.

The question as to whether engagements should be long or short has never been settled and it cannot be settled categorically. It depends upon the total situation in each case, and much depends upon what has gone before. From the point of view of sound choice the engagement period should be long enough to furnish an adequate basis upon which to evaluate the resources of the two personalities and their compatibilities. If the courting period has furnished such a basis then engagement may well be brief. From the point of view of the sex factor, long engagements are on the whole not desirable. We need to observe that biologically engagement is an abnormal state. The relationship is one which tends to stimulate and arouse the sexual urges while it does not appropriately permit their normal, fulfilling release. In many cases the situation becomes one of severe strain and in not a few definitely unhealthy. The weights for and the weights against a long engagement may come into conflict and both need to enter into the consideration.

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The question as to how far physical intimacies are appropriate or wise in engagement is always a burning one. While to this question, too, no categorical answer can be given, the answer varying with different couples, nevertheless the imperious forces in human nature suggest caution. Without reference to morals or ethics, expediency counsels limitations. The physical urges tend so easily to dominate the whole situation to the exclusion of the interplay of all the other areas of the personalities of the lovers, particularly important during this time of exploration. From apparently innocent beginnings they often easily and quickly pass beyond the limits of control.

While in engagement a degree of intimacy may be expected which would perhaps not be appropriate or wise before engagement, it is desirable, both from the point of view of physical and emotional health and that of conserving the finest values of the relationship, to keep well within such bounds as will forestall a dominance of sexual passion. Engagement is likely to contribute more richly to the marriage companionship to follow when it is devoted to a cultivation of such a correspondence between the whole of their personalities as will enable them in marriage

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to make their passionate relationship a genuinely spiritual experience. Restraint at this time may prove richly rewarding in marriage.

The danger of going beyond safe limits in the face of imperious forces is borne out by the many case histories from the supposedly normal strata of society. In Hamilton's group, for example, about one third indulged in sex relations with their spouses before marriage. A study of the individual histories makes it clear that in many of these cases this occurred not with deliberate intent but because the lovers lost their heads under the sway of passion aroused.

It is sometimes argued that the deeper intimacies in engagement are needed to test the physical responses and compatibilities of the lovers. For this purpose it is not at all necessary fully to arouse the passionate powers. Assurance of physical responses comes long before the deeper areas are reached. The stirring of a sleeper is assurance that he is alive and that he may be fully aroused.

It is to be strongly recommended that engaged couples frankly talk over the sexual side of the marriage relationship, to compare and to share their un-



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derstanding, their attitudes and points of view. These need to be included in a final estimating of the harmonizing possibilities. It is desirable for the couple, separately or together, to read one or two of the best books dealing with the sex aspect of the marriage relationship and to talk over what they have read. Beyond the information gained and the misconceptions corrected, the great value of such a talking of things over is its effect upon their respective attitudes. No other thing is likely to be more effective in smoothing away restraints, tensions, fears and embarrassments, and in creating between the couple an atmosphere of confidence with reference to this most intimate area of their life together as husband and wife. The very fact that in conversation they have brought this relationship out into the light, together with all their other interests and problems, tends to put their companionship upon a new plane of security and assurance. Many couples have testified to the writer that nothing in their engagement proved of such value in marriage as the fact that in frank conversation and in mutual study they had come to an understanding together on these intimate matters. It proves in most cases of incalculable value in minimiz-

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ing the adjustment problems of the first months of marriage and in realizing early a satisfying relationship. Had Dickinson's group of brides followed such a course, the record of the group for the first year of marriage would assuredly have been much less terrible.

The attitudes with reference to sex at which the engaged couple should arrive together before marriage should embrace at least the following concepts:

1. An appreciation of sex as a natural, normal life force, the urges of which are not ignoble any more than the craving for food or music or any other desire that arises out of natural life functions; that, indeed, the sex urge when wisely used and harmonized with the interests of life as a whole has creative contributions to make in the life of the individual and in human relations greater than those of any of the other life endowments.

2. An acceptance of the fact that in human life sex serves not alone the purposes of procreation, as among animals, but also, and particularly, the purposes of affection; that normally the human sex act is first of all the supreme form of the passionate expression of love.

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3. An understanding that sex intercourse in marriage is not only permissible but desirable; first because within normal limits it promotes physical, mental and emotional health and well-being, and second, because when rightly conceived and used it serves to vivify, sustain and develop love.

4. An appreciation of the normal human body as a noble creation in its entirety, and that the segregation of any of its parts as ignoble or shameful is abnormal and unworthy; that in the mutual exercise of "the play-function of sex" in the prelude to coitus no area of the body of the lovers need be excluded from the service of love. None is to be regarded as "untouchable."

5. The conscious possession of passionate powers and their spontaneous manifestation are not only to be looked upon as normal but may be welcomed as a fortunate endowment, serving as a natural foundation upon which to build an enduring marital companionship of love. In coitus a full and free release of their passionate powers on the part of both mates is not only desirable but necessary to the full fruition of sexual love.

6. Married lovers need not put undue restraint

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upon their sex desires. Barring excessive artificial stimulation, their mutual desires may serve as their guide. (It is to be observed that we are not advocating no restraint but no *undue* restraint. For wholesome living there must be restraint in every area of life and the sexual sphere is no exception. The statement is made in view of the fact that case histories disclose a widespread prevalence of the crippling attitude of mind that sex relations in marriage must be rigidly restricted. Hence the not infrequent cases in which coitus occurs once a month, once in months or once a year, with all the unbalancing consequences of such a regime.)

7. The acceptance that in the best interests of all who are concerned in procreation, including the offspring, and in the interest of mutually satisfying sex relations unhampered by inhibiting fears, the bearing of children is to be intelligently regulated and controlled.

The above outline of attitude has been stated with care. It represents the essential minimum against which those approaching marriage need to evaluate their feelings and convictions. Granting an affectionately sharing personal relationship as the marriage

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ideal, if both mates enter marriage with the above outlined attitude convincingly held, a richly colorful sunrise will be shedding golden rays of promise upon their highway to genuine, happy marriage. There remain other requirements, of course, but if these basic ones are met, the others will be more easily fulfilled.

### *Premarital Examination*

A thorough physical and medical examination preliminary to marriage is to be strongly recommended. It is indeed desirable that some general examination precede announcement of engagement, for if any condition were to be revealed which should preclude marriage, the shock and the complications would be likely to be less.

Premarital examination is important for the following reasons: to discover lurking disease or physical conditions or hereditary tendencies that would render marriage precarious; to discover any conditions needing remedy before marriage; to secure the assurance and help of professional advice and instruction needed for adjustment in marriage. It has been already shown that those of Dickinson's cases which

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had received premarital examination and instruction were much more generally successful in making their adaptations in marriage than were those who had not such professional help. The woman is likely to receive the greatest aid from the gynecologist (a physician specializing in the pelvic organs of women), and the man, from the genito-urinary specialist.

The examination should of course include scrutiny of the entire sex mechanism from the point of view of successful coitus. In the man there may occur adhesions of the foreskin which require correction, or excessively long or constricted foreskin which may make circumcision or other corrective measures advisable. The writer has not infrequently met cases of young men over eighteen years of age whose foreskin had never been fully retracted, revealing when released an indescribably filthy condition. The irritation which it had produced had caused marked nervous and psychic disturbances. In the woman there may appear adhesions about the clitoris, displacements of the reproductive organs and other conditions such as a too rigid hymen which should be known before marriage with reference to corrective measures that may be indicated. Small women are

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often worried for fear they are "too small" to bear children, or for coitus. This can be easily ascertained by means of measurements made by the gynecologist.

As a matter of assurance to one another, the medical examination of both parties should include thorough examination for venereal disease. We have already stated that no man who has once had gonorrhea or syphilis, even though it may have been years ago, should marry until he has been reëxamined by a competent physician, the examination to include laboratory tests, and the assurance that he is non-infectious. The importance of this matter will be appreciated when we are reminded that in Dickinson's cases the incidence of venereal disease, usually gonorrhea, is 94 times in 1,098 cases—or one in twelve, and that the highest rate is found among the group who came to separation and divorce.

As a matter of security and pride it has already become an accepted principle among a small proportion of modern socially-minded young people to secure a medical certificate of health and fitness for maternity, as assurance to themselves and the partner. For a period of years a movement has been gaining ground for legal requirement of premarital medical exami-

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nation for the issuing of marriage licenses. Some states have established such laws. As a matter of precaution and of fairness, in addition to the personal advantage of professional advice, couples contemplating marriage should not wait upon legal requirement in this matter but should avail themselves of premarital examination as the sensible thing to do.

### *Equipment in Knowledge*

We have repeatedly stressed the importance of specific knowledge of the sexual life and have shown the lamentable consequences of ignorance and misinformation. No great elaboration is therefore needed at this point. The facts that have been presented should make it clear that, granting a favorable choice of mate, successful marriage, especially in its sex aspects, waits first of all upon a certain background of attitude and understanding. Understanding will of itself go a long way toward correcting unwholesome attitudes.

In the Davis study it is found that of a group of 116 women who considered their marriage happy, 57.5 per cent had received specific preparation for the



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sex side of marriage, whereas of a corresponding group of 116 women who were unhappy in marriage only 38.2 per cent had received such preparation. This becomes the more significant when we observe that in most cases such instruction was very fragmentary, such as would be considered quite inadequate from a modern point of view. Of the total group of 438 who state that they had no preparation for married life "we find that 257, or 58.6 per cent regret the fact that they went into marriage blind-fold as to its relationship and believe that adequate instruction would have helped them in adjusting their lives." Instruction "would have saved years of difficult adjustment;" "It would have kept me from misjudging my husband and avoided years of unhappiness for us both," are samples of the convictions expressed.

Dickinson has set down a list of items in which he has found accurate significant information lacking:

- (1) Woman's anatomy.
- (2) Her physiology, especially as to menstrual and ovarian function and the rest of the reproductive cycle; its possible mental and emotional meaning.

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- (3) The theory of psycho-sexual relationships.
- (4) Methods of effecting painless entry of the virgin hymen at early coitus—its preludes, rhythm, mechanics, stages, completion; the physiological interpretation, emotional, and social implications.
- (5) Comprehension of the roots of sexual life in childhood experience, imagination, and previous practice.
- (6) Difference between men and women and possible drift of each in the psychology of sexual love.
- (7) Means of controlling conception.

It is obvious that Dickinson is speaking from the point of view of the woman. It is important that each partner have an understanding, in advance of marriage, of the sex anatomy and physiology of both the man and the woman. We would add to the list a knowledge of the character, prevalence and consequences of the venereal diseases.<sup>1</sup>

We are impelled once more to reiterate that the educational equipment of each mate should assure an

<sup>1</sup> For a brief authoritative discussion of venereal diseases, the little book *Venereal Diseases* by Dr. William F. Snow, Funk and Wagnalls, price 30 cents, may be recommended.

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understanding and an appreciation of the differences in the psychosexual make-up of men and women, so that marital adjustment may proceed on the basis of what the essential nature of each mate actually is and not on the basis of what each thinks the other's nature ought to be, as so frequently and unfortunately happens.

### *Physical Preparation*

Physical preparation for marriage relates primarily to the woman. With the exception of occasional structural abnormalities in the male, such as we have mentioned in discussing premarital examination and which may require correction, the male is fully prepared physically for the full accomplishment and enjoyment of coitus in the initial act. The woman is not quite so fortunate. She possesses in the hymen an anatomical structure which with few exceptions requires alteration before sex union of the mates can be accomplished. With the exception of those modern women who have already learned to prepare themselves in such ways as we are about to suggest, this alteration takes place in the first, and a number of

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subsequent acts of coitus. In the first complete penetration the edges of the hymen which partially obstructs the vaginal orifice are nicked or slit and the membrane pushed aside, entailing often some pain and frequently a little bleeding. The pain is likely to be increased by unskillful penetration.

Of Hamilton's group of one hundred wives, sixty-two stated that the first act of coitus was not painful or not seriously so, and thirty-seven said it was painful, seventeen of these having found it seriously so.

While the hymen itself presents a physical handicap to mutual participation in the early acts of coitus, the greatest handicap usually lies in the inhibiting anticipation of the "rupture of the hymen," as it is frequently spoken of. The hesitant and fearful expectation on the part of the man is often quite as great as it is on the part of the woman. The result usually is that the woman has no pleasurable experience in the first act—and often not in subsequent acts—but meets instead with disappointment and not infrequently shock which may play its part in a permanent negative conditioning of her sexual life. For the inexperienced man this situation naturally increases his initial

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awkwardness, and this contributes to their mutual spoiling of a situation which they desired to be a beautiful, vital act of love.

The importance of this handicap and of dealing with it intelligently is much greater than is commonly realized. The way sex comes into experience in marriage tends to have a profound influence upon the whole marital adjustment and relationship ahead, especially so far as the woman is concerned. Van De Velde uttered a profound truth when he said, "Underneath love there always lies in wait hatred." In this area of life there tends to be a rather sharp line between likes and dislikes. If there exists a zone of tolerance between at all, it is likely to be a narrow one. When an experience which has been anticipated as one profoundly thrilling and deeply satisfying, and one, too, that is to have high spiritual significance, turns out to be a rather crude, physical, unaesthetic and painful performance, the anticipation of love easily and often quickly swings to the extreme of aversion and disgust and not infrequently the wife becomes permanently conditioned against the realization of her sexual capacities. The Davis study supports these assertions. Nine hundred and twenty-five married women answered the

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question, "Were you attracted or repelled by the way in which sex relations came into your experience?", as follows:

Attracted	431	women
Repelled	237	"
Both	34	"
Neither	223	"
	<hr/>	
Total	925	

It is found that the percentage of those in the happy group who were attracted by the way in which sex relations came into experience is a little more than twice as great as in the corresponding unhappy group.

The facts which have been revealed by various studies point to the importance of removing every possible obstacle and handicap to making the initiation of sex relations a mutually agreeable if not deeply satisfying and beautiful love experience. The obstacles of ignorance and perverted attitudes have been discussed. We are now concerned with the physical handicap presented by the hymen. This problem is really comparatively simple. It is merely a matter of stretching the hymen *before* marriage instead of

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leaving it to be accomplished awkwardly and with mutual confusion, if no worse, in the first act of coitus, an episode which at best is likely to be somewhat trying. The expansion may easily be made by the gynecologist a few weeks before marriage, or he may instruct the woman in a method of stretching it by herself in advance of marriage. Such service or advice may well be made a feature of the premarital examination. This preparatory measure is a simple matter but one of great importance and one that is likely to be enormously rewarding. The matter should be understood by the lover. Intelligent management of the initiation and gentleness on the part of the husband are of course imperative, especially when the hymen remains intact. If natural lubrication fails to appear, artificial lubrication becomes necessary.

### *The Initiation*

We have shown how important and often crucial is the initiation of sex experience in marriage. It follows that the most favorable possible conditions after the wedding should prevail. The proverbial "wedding trip" is quite irrational. The wearing tensions

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and strains of preparations for the wedding and the ordeal itself are usually exhausting, especially for the bride. Both will be in need of relaxation and of rest. If they are to make a brief journey to some quiet spot where they may have a reasonable amount of solitude and freedom, well and good. But to set out at once upon an extended journey requiring travel by Pullman and the general wear and tear of travel is usually unwise. To have to initiate their sex relationship under such conditions is unfortunate. Instead of providing the exceptionally favorable circumstances and setting that the situation calls for, it furnishes about the worst. A sea voyage may be more favorable, yet far from ideal. A sea-sick bride or bridegroom is hardly in suitable physical condition or mood for a romantic and favorable initiation of the sexual relationship or of the marital love-life in general. Usually it is far more sensible for the couple to repair to some quiet place nearby for a time if at all possible, before setting out on a wedding trip, if a trip must be taken.

The question is frequently asked how soon after the wedding sex intercourse may properly begin. The question is an important one but no categorical answer



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can be given. It depends upon a number of factors or conditions embraced in the main in the attitude and temperamental make-up of the wife and upon what has gone before. The initiation may be appropriate upon the wedding night and it may not be, in extreme cases, for weeks. The general principle that should rule is, when it is agreeable to or desired by both the partners *and not before*. This means, of course, that the wife must be the criterion in the matter. Nearly all husbands are ready and glad, and most are keenly eager to have it begin upon the wedding night or very soon after. Not only that; for most men a postponement for any considerable number of days involves severe tension and a struggle for control. This is no reflection upon the man. It arises out of his natural sexual constitution, as we have earlier observed. It is no more of a reflection upon him than the wife's differently responding sexual constitution is a reflection upon her. This is where the bride needs to have an understanding of their different make-ups in order that she may be sympathetically considerate of him as well as he of her. But whatever the strain and the struggle on the part of the man, the initiation *must* wait upon the wife's glad—not merely willing—ac-

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ceptance. Many a bride will consent as willing while she has fear or aversion. The way must be won not by persuasion or urging but by the delicate wooing of courtship. Without that glad acceptance mutually, the initiation is risky, to say the least, in reference to future happiness. From great numbers of happy marriages comes the testimony that there has been no one thing in their marriage relationship which the wife has appreciated and treasured more than the husband's delicate considerateness in the first few days of marriage. In his fight for self-mastery in this situation let the husband not forget that what matters is not how soon the joys of sexual love may be realized but rather what it may mean to their whole future relationship. This point is well illustrated in the case of a couple well known to us, now in the late years of life. They represent one of that small proportion of ideal marriages of which we spoke earlier, in which love and companionship and mutual growth have progressed throughout the years, in which marriage has brought life's supreme realization. Upon the wedding night, after retiring, the husband merely placed his hand lovingly about the wife's shoulder and so they talked of their love and their future. Some years

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along in their happy marriage the husband one day asked his wife, "What would you have done if I had made any approach to intercourse upon the wedding night?" The reply was, "I would have made no protest but I would have always hated you for it."

We have said that the time of initiation depends mainly upon the wife's attitude and what has gone before. If both mates have freed themselves reasonably well of constraining inhibitions; if both are well informed in reference to sexual matters; if they have talked these matters over freely and frankly so that they understand one another and hence are ready to incorporate the sexual relationship happily in their love-life; especially if the wife has had the physical preparation as to the hymen, of which we have spoken; if the couple has arrived at a relationship of mutual confidence, the initial nuptials may very appropriately and to advantage take place on the wedding night. Under these conditions it may bring their needed relaxation from strain, and help to make the wedding night a richly memorable occasion. However, with the lack of such a background and preparation, which is so common, we are disposed to advise against it and to favor a more gradual approach. In

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caution to the husband we reiterate, that a physical approach to coitus is dangerous; that the acceptable approach must come by way of the psychic and aesthetic or, if you will, the spiritual.

The strain of the wedding and preparing for it usually leaves the couple fatigued. Such a condition is unfavorable to successful coitus. We wish to repeat that if the wife does not quickly achieve full satisfaction with terminating orgasm in coitus, there is no occasion for immediate concern or excessive disappointment. Let the wife remember that it is the nature of woman to develop her sexual capacity gradually. Only let not any couple permit themselves to drift into an acceptance of an unsatisfactory situation. Harris' suggestion is pertinent, that the couple should enter upon experimentation in the spirit of play and with a saving sense of humor. If, however, mutual satisfaction has not been achieved within a reasonable time, a few weeks or three months at most, professional advice and help should be sought.

As to the matter of frequency of coitus, whatever the regime may be that will ultimately prove to be the best adapted to the needs and desires of both the partners, moderation is advisable in the early weeks

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or until the wife's capacities and inclinations have become developed and revealed. This may require self-curb on the part of the husband but it is important. A frequency that may later prove to be quite acceptable and desired on the part of the wife may be objectionable to her during the awakening, developing period. Frank, open confidence between the lovers on these matters, and mutual considerateness is the key. But let the husband never forget that in nearly all cases the problem of satisfaction is the wife's. If the couple has decided that it is not desirable that the wife should become pregnant early and that contraceptives are to be used, it is in many cases desirable that during the early days of marriage a measure be chosen which is applicable to the man and does not require "fussing" on the part of the wife. After the wife has become more adjusted to the sexual regime, measures which she will take care of may be found more suitable.

Husbands who have become informed on sexual matters before marriage and appreciate the woman's need of orgasm experience and understand the propriety under certain conditions of producing her orgasm by clitoris friction or other artificial means, may

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feel impelled to resort to such measures on the wedding night or the early days of marriage in the absence of orgasm in coitus. This is not likely to be advisable unless the couple are so closely in accord on these matters that in frank confidence this solution may be decided upon between them. What later may be welcomed as an emergency measure may prove shocking during the initial days.

### *The Sexual Regime*

Granting now that the sexual relationship has been soundly and successfully initiated and adjusted in the early, experimental weeks or months of marriage, there remains the task of perfecting the relationship and of gradually arriving at a regime that will for the long pull most satisfyingly and most creatively meet the desires and needs of both husband and wife. The lovers need to remain in full consciousness of the fact that anything like perfection in this strategic area of their marriage requires time, hence there needs to be continued patience, tolerance and sympathetic coöperation. If the initiation has been mutually successful—taking for granted an unselfish lover rela-

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tionship—the rest of the journey may be viewed with courage and confidence. Let them not assume, however, that the whole battle has been won for good and all. They have much to learn and to harmonize, and adjustments will have to continue to be made throughout life to meet changing needs, desires and conditions.

The pair need to keep their sexual goal clearly before them, namely, mutual satisfaction with fully releasing, completely terminating orgasm in normal intercourse, all richly enhanced by a skillful art of love. Though a given couple may never attain the ideal, let them never cease their mutual efforts to approximate the ideal. In cases in which the ideal as to regularly mutual orgasm seems for good reasons to be beyond reach, it is all the more important that the loss be compensated for by a peculiarly rich lover relationship and art.

Let us be reminded that the essential marriage bond is a psychic, a spiritual bond else it is not really marriage. Our goal is to make the sensuous sexual experiences serve spiritual ends. Harris' words are to the point, "True spirituality is a sense of partnership and unity. This sense is achieved through

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all ranges of life. But, as far as sexual intercourse is concerned, the first step toward this unity is to perform the act properly in a sense of unity. If people wish to be ascetic let them remain unmarried. But I am certain that spirituality in marriage goes aglimmering with astounding rapidity if the partners are kept in a state of emotional turbulence by unsatisfied desires, or by the failure of one to meet the other on the emotional level." His words in another place add emphasis here, "Husbands report a complete satisfaction which it transpires is not shared by the wives when the truth is told. The really serious aspect is not the cases of disastrous maladjustment but the large number of reports of limited satisfaction, of continued struggle for adjustment, of the continuance in married life of a 'sex problem'—something still unsolved." It is for these reasons that we have urged that no couple entering marriage permit themselves to drift into an acceptance of an unequal, unsatisfactory sex relationship but that they grapple with the problem together with the intelligence and persistence that may be expected of men and women who appreciate that they are playing for life's high stakes.

Granting that a spirit of harmony rules in the re-



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lationship of a newly married couple, their task is to develop a lover's technique that will serve to sustain and develop that harmony. Skill in this art is required in every phase of the act of sex communion. And what are its phases? For the sake of clarity in description the total ideal sex act may be divided into three successive stages: The prelude of love-play, the copulative stage, and the postlude of repose which Van De Velde has so aptly called "the afterglow." In ideal coitus none of these stages can be omitted or slighted.

A good deal has already been said upon the first stage, that of love-play. Our study of the difference in arousability between men and women has shown us the importance of this first phase particularly from the point of view of the woman. It serves to develop a common emotional mood; to arouse the passionate responses of the wife so that she may enter the second stage as nearly as possible on equal terms with the husband; to lift the entire act to the plane of the aesthetic and of the affections and so give supreme delight in itself; and to bring the sex organs of the woman as well as the man's into the physiological state required for normal intercourse. It may include the whole range of pleasing lover-like contacts and

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caresses which their imagination, skill and practice may devise: tender words of love, kisses wherever most pleasing, deft, gentle caresses of any of the areas of the body, seeking out particularly those which experience shows to be the most responsive. This includes the definitely erotic areas—the breasts, the external sex organs, and in the woman particularly the clitoris. The man needs to know that there are close nervous connections between the woman's breasts and the erotic parts of her sex organs and hence the caressing of the breasts is highly stimulating. This is particularly true when the nipples are caressed with lips and tongue. To virtually all women this lover's caress is exquisitely pleasing, and with its use many women require no stimulation of the sex organs directly.

Let it be emphasized again, this love-play is *mutual* play and not alone a function of the male. There must be mutual participation from the first touch to the fading of "the afterglow." The participation of the one elicits most powerfully the responses of the other. There can be full response and complete joy only when there is mutuality throughout.

There are limitless possibilities in the development

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of skill in variety in this lover's art. For many, especially the men, it requires long and painstaking practice to acquire an effective and pleasing art. It is by no means so simple as it may sound. The clumsiness of so many men is amazing. Their "touch" is so crude and indelicate that instead of awakening sexual responses it inhibits them. One woman says, "His touch is like magic; it has fire in it; it is irresistible." Another, "His touch is wooden, mechanical; it has no life." Between the two extremes you have every shade and variety with all the corresponding degrees of thrill or of disappointment which they elicit. The most loyal and tender lover's heart is often tied to a very clumsy fist. However that may be, every man with devoted attention and practice can develop greater skill than he has if he will only appreciate the fact that upon nothing will the quality, the steadiness, and the growth of the marital companionship depend more than upon the love art he achieves.

Harris states the situation forcefully when he says, "Good intentions are not enough here. It is well-meaning blundering which so often produces that unfortunate conflict of experience between an affectionate husband and wife which seems to separate the

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physical act from all spiritual context; and love is left painfully to climb up out of the pit into which it has been so heedlessly hurled. Many women are discouraged and conditioned for life by the first blundering crazy approach of their husbands. Others have told me that their love carried them over the first few months and then the continued recurrence of an aggression from which they derived no satisfaction deepened their own resignation into disgust."

A young woman some six months after her marriage to a splendid young man with whom she seemed to be in every way an exceptional match, said to the writer, "I was so disappointed to find him so awkward as a lover; his touch was so—so, well, mechanical. I was so surprised because he is so intelligent and skillful in other ways." Then she brightened and added, "But he is a quick learner and it is working out all right." That is the crux of the matter—making progress in practice.

The woman is more likely to fail because of hesitancy, reticence and reserve. She would like to, perhaps, but thinks she mustn't. Love in play must have freedom, something of abandon if it is to reach its peaks of joy and develop its real capacities. When

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there is freedom between lovers each may encourage, coach and guide the other and so make progress together.

The environmental setting also needs attention. A pleasing room, bright lights, dim lights, darkness—whichever enhances most, temperature, freedom from distractions, etc.

The kind and extent of foreplay that best meets the desires and needs of married lovers varies of course with different couples. With one couple brief wooing and simple caresses will be all that is desired and needed in preliminaries. Another couple will prefer and perhaps need more intense, varied and prolonged play. With another couple all this will need to lead to the caressing and stimulating of the sex organs themselves before there is mutual readiness for the second phase. Another couple may find a more primitive, direct brief manipulation of the sex organs better suited to them, and every couple will find it of advantage to vary their play in all sorts of ways both by way of experimentation and as pleasing variety. Method and technique must shun the routine and the stereotyped.

The second, the copulative phase begins with the

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entrance of the fully erect penis into the vagina. It progresses after a little with gradually developing synchronous movements by both partners, becoming more vigorous as sexual feeling becomes increasingly intense, culminating finally in the convulsive reflex movements of the orgasm in which sexual feeling reaches a sudden climax and the semen of the male is involuntarily discharged. In this copulative phase, too, a considerable variety may be developed, once the man is able to hold an erection and restrain orgasm for some time. This phase may vary from a moment to an hour according to desire and the method employed.

We have already shown in an earlier chapter that the technique of this phase must be varied and adapted to the solution of the problem of enabling the man to hold back and the woman to quicken her response so that they may achieve synchronous orgasms if possible or at least orgasms for both. The method described there should be carefully noted as a basis for the experimentation needed in each case to bring success.

It is, of course, to be expected that in view of the range of differences between men and women in sex-

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ual constitution, and the varied and extreme combinations of personalities to which this gives rise, together with the general lack of skill which still prevails on the part of men and women alike, there will at best be many couples who will not achieve the ideal results which we have been urging. There will remain the cases in which the man regularly experiences his climax and the woman sometimes and not at other times. So long as the wife achieves satisfying climax in a reasonable proportion of instances—Hamilton puts the minimum at 20 per cent—the situation does not preclude a happily adjusted relationship. After all, the ultimate criterion is *how satisfying to both mates is their total marriage relationship*. Where the wife experiences satisfying orgasm at all, it should be possible together to work out the problem to the point where this will occur with sufficient frequency to dispose of any serious sex problem.

Here, of course, we enter the extensive problem-territory, the adjustment area of marriage where disparity, inequality, and frustration have been permitted so extensively to exist and play havoc. As an aid in working out these adjustments we need to consider the legitimacy and propriety of resorting to arti-

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ficial means of stimulation in order to bring the orgasm in the woman. We may first note the facts. While the matter has not been worked out in percentages, the case studies of Hamilton, Dickinson and others show that such means, particularly clitoris friction, are largely resorted to, in preliminaries to coitus, as variety in lover's technique, and especially to "finish" the wife when coitus has terminated without her having reached orgasm. When this measure has been employed as a supplement, and carried out as a love act, it has helped many a couple to a well-adjusted sexual regime. No serious objections can be raised either on physiological or psychological grounds. The reactions do not differ essentially from those in normal intercourse except that there may be less of the finer, vivid psychic content and that there is less likelihood of full vaginal climax along with the clitoridal climax.

The question as to the frequency of coitus becomes a live one in many marriages. It is one which must be agreeably settled for both partners if harmony is to prevail. The situation frequently calls for compromise. In most cases of unequal demand, the greater one is on the part of the husband, although there are



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those cases where the demands of the wife exceed those of the husband. Conflict is least likely to occur in the relationship of couples which regularly achieve full mutual satisfaction. On this point Harris has discerned the truth,<sup>1</sup> "A wife and a husband, thus well adjusted to each other, very seldom overvalue the pleasure of sexual exercise. It is the hungry man who sees weird visions of overladen tables and cannot keep his thoughts from food. It is the sexually unsatisfied whose cravings keep them ever anxious and uneasy. A properly adjusted man and wife of this type are safe in all sexual practice. . . . Having learned to gain full satisfaction, they are safe to approach each other purely in response to their real desires. They need not worry much about how many times a month. If every episode of sexual relations satisfies them both, they are highly unlikely to overdo the business. If their meetings are unsatisfactory, they are very likely to continue restlessly trying to gain satisfaction to the loss both of health and peace of mind."

Not a few men fall into the notion that every manifestation of sexual impulse that arises spontaneously

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on Marriage.*

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must be or has a right to be promptly gratified, to say nothing of those who constantly and deliberately tease their lightly slumbering responses in order to make occasion for indulgence. Must every erection occurring at night, for example, be made the occasion for waking the wife out of sound sleep one or more times for coitus? Human nature has its limits and the limit is almost certain to be reached here. Occasional awakening for sex communion with mutual desire and agreement may minister to love with rare richness, but for the purpose of serving a routine want on demand it is another matter. Men should know that erections occurring spontaneously at night are mostly due to reflex stimulation from a full bladder and not from glandular sex tension. Empty the bladder and the need is met.

The studies of Hamilton and of Dickinson reveal a frequency in coitus among the married ranging from daily or several times nightly at one extreme, to about once a year at the other. In both studies the average works out to be about from two to three times a week. We are not suggesting this average as a guide for normal people but merely as some sort of mark

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from which to depart in either direction according to mutual desire and need. Both abnormal extremes affect the average and we do not yet know what would be the average frequency in a considerable group of marriages in which a satisfactory sex adjustment prevails.

The postlude phase of coitus begins when the convulsive acme of orgasm has been completed and the surging tide of physiologic and psychic forces flow swiftly back from their high crest toward a peaceful slumber level. Among real lovers the swiftly receding mountainous crest of passion brings in its wake a smooth, gently moving swell of the spiritual forces of love and leaves it to dominate the so-recently violent scene in a mood of sublime peace. This is *satisfaction* supreme. Among husbands and wives where love does not rule or where it moves on low levels there is no postlude. With the receding tide husband and wife turn away from each other, sometimes with a measure of aversion, and quickly go to sleep, for the normal reaction from coitus is drowsiness. This is *satiety* as contrasted with satisfaction. The spiritual significance of the love act is not for them. The wife always subsides slower than the husband. For him to

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stop, turn over and go to sleep is a blow to many a woman, equivalent to saying that the physical feeling being over, we are done.

Many married lovers do not wish to separate at once but desire to remain together for a little, quietly resting, while the turbulent tide recedes and the gentle swell of peace flows in. Finally when they do separate it is only in the physical sense. They remain in each other's arms and give themselves over to the enveloping atmosphere of inner quietude while the gentle tide of love flows through their beings. For genuine lovers these are incomparably spiritual moments. The troubles, trials, disappointments and hardships of life drift away with the violent tide. All is peace.

Van De Velde's term, "the afterglow" kindles the imagination. Those who have seen and felt the sunset afterglow of the Southwest need no further interpretation. There are no clouds in this sunset. The clear horizon is aglow, not with brilliant colors of crimson and gold but with the most delicate tints of yellow, saffron, pink and mauve shading up from the sharp horizon line into the blue sky. It is an atmosphere. It must be felt; it cannot be described. You do not speak

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for the sound of a voice is sacrilege. You only sit in silence while a deep, mysterious satisfaction of spiritual origin and quality wells up in your soul. So too is this afterglow of the love act of married lovers. To miss it is to miss the real climax, and ignorantly or carelessly to neglect it is to commit the unpardonable sin.

It needs to be said that variety in position in coitus has a bearing upon orgasm experience. For example, a considerable number of women who have difficulty in attaining orgasm in the conventional position, with the man above, readily achieve orgasm in this position reversed, with the woman above, she thus becoming the more active of the two mates.

Many persons are uncertain as to the propriety and safety of intercourse during pregnancy. The general position of physicians today on this matter is that unless there are special contra-indications which the physician may determine, moderate intercourse with exceptional gentleness and in suitable position is not only permissible but desirable, for not only does the man retain his sex desire but, contrary to common notion, the woman does also. Indeed, sex desire seems to be increased in more pregnant women than it is

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decreased. Of Hamilton's eighty-one women who had histories of marital pregnancies, seventy-six had indulged in sex intercourse during at least one pregnancy. Twenty-eight of the eighty-one women stated that pregnancy did not affect their sex desire; twenty-five experienced increased desire during one or another part of at least one pregnancy; one had a variable increase and decrease, one said it was "very strong," and twenty had decreased desire. In the Davis study, of the 822 women who had been pregnant, and answered the question, 726 had intercourse during pregnancy and ninety-six did not.

Van De Velde states a cautious position as follows: "If the woman is healthy; if the uterus shows no tendency to premature function—(slight blood stain, convulsive pains)—or has not shown such tendency in previous pregnancy or pregnancies; if all necessary care and consideration are exercised during the act; and excessive stimulation of vulva and vagina, avoided; if both partners are absolutely clean, and if, for the last—say four—weeks, total abstinence is observed, then in my opinion the risks to the woman are reduced to a very slight amount."

As pregnancy advances, the conventional position

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in coitus, with the man above, becomes uncomfortable for the woman and even dangerous for her and the child. Hence a variation in position becomes desirable. If experimenting by the couple does not solve the problem the advice of a physician should be sought. The same suggestion as to position applies in cases in which the man is exceptionally large and the woman small.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### ***THE FAMILY***





## CHAPTER VII

### *THE FAMILY*

**I**T is important that we now turn our attention, even though briefly, to the biological function of marriage, the bearing and rearing of children. We shall take for granted the social responsibility involved. What we wish to note is the fact that marriage contributes most fully and richly to personal development and marital companionship only as it progresses to become a family, when children become the dominant shared interest.

We need not attempt to settle the controversy as to whether the parental impulse and longings are instinctive or a cultural product. The fact remains that the child, whether it be a birdling, a kitten, a puppy or a human infant, stirs within every normal person sympathetic responses that are tremendously stimulating and pleasing, and which seem to meet a fundamental human need. That parenthood becomes a marked influence in the development of personality and character in married couples is an observation so common as to be taken for granted. In part this

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is doubtless a result of the severe discipline which parenthood imposes, but this does not explain the result. The personal growth is doubtless brought about more through the fulfillment of a basic human need. Whatever compensations other social interests and outlets may bring to those who are deprived of parenthood, the compensation at best is never complete. How common is the expression, "What she (or he, or they) needed is children." It is only fitting that society hold in sympathetic appreciation those who through professional necessity or involuntary sterility are deprived of the privilege of having children, recognizing that this denial is a genuine sacrifice.

Children are needed not alone for the personal development and self-realization of the married but equally for the deepening and strengthening of their marital companionship. For a vital and rich partnership there is needed not only the sharing of mutual interests but of responsibilities as well. The relationship becomes most upbuilding when there is a real sharing of burden and sacrifices. Children are the greatest responsibility and the severest test that come to parents. The bearing and rearing of children is

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no picnic. To all who have observing eyes and certainly to those who have brought up children it need not be told that children bring demands for arduous self-denial and devotion in ordinary daily care of and provision for the child alone, to say nothing of the greatest of all responsibilities—the training and educating of the child for successful and honorable living, the responsibility of helping to create a new personality. The child comes to the parents a mere bundle of inborn impulses which are the raw materials of its life. Each of these native impulses has as great a capacity for ill as for good. The result will depend upon the direction and development that is given these impulses and capacities, and the manner in which they become integrated in the budding personality. The infant is a bit of plastic life to be developed into a human spirit fit to play his part in a terrifically competitive world, and the parents are the artists responsible for the long complex task of fashioning the new personality. For parents who take their task seriously, the sharing of this responsibility tends powerfully to strengthen the bond between them. With this sharing of responsibility goes, of course, also the sharing of the joys and the thrills that

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the child brings to the home, turning these very responsibilities into incomparable satisfaction.

Parenthood is also needed to perfect the development of the social nature of husband and wife, for this development is as important to successful marriage as to the larger social adjustment. The social sympathy among human beings which has made an organized society possible and which underlies our entire social structure evolved out of the combined influences of the conjugal relationship of mates and the relationship of parents and children. Just so in marital partnership today the influence of children added to the conjugal relationship is needed to develop to the full those sympathetic, social responses which are the most distinctively human qualities and in the exercise of which we derive life's deepest satisfactions. Our egoistic impulses always remain a deep-rooted, powerful drive which needs for wholesome balance to be counteracted by the social impulses and spirit which children help to awaken and develop. The lack of this development on the social side, in the lives of the childless, is doubtless one of the elements in the personality-incompleteness of many of those so deprived.

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The question of having children needs to be viewed in the perspective of the whole life span of the married. While children bring their own satisfaction-rewards even through the long years in which the sacrifices and hardships they entail are most severe, it is when children reach maturity and stand upon their own feet, so to speak; when the responsibility of the parents has been fulfilled and children are tackling the task of carving out their own careers; when they in turn marry and establish homes and have children; and when they begin to make their impress upon the world, it is then that the rewards and satisfactions of parenthood come to the full. The severest costs are forgotten in the incomparable satisfaction they bring. Witness any normal couple with their first grandchild, and then presume to question the wisdom of having children! It is in the declining years, in the gradual approach to the sunset of life that the failure to have had children brings home its deepest loss—lonely old age with the gnawings of longings unfulfilled.

One of the great sources of satisfaction in children in the ripening years of the lives of parents is the consciousness of having made in them a permanent

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contribution to society—if they have turned out well. None of us can, nor do those who have any degree of social-mindedness wish to, escape the responsibility of making a substantial contribution to the life and the progress of the society of which we are a part. Somehow to make a lasting impression and a social contribution in our jobs, vocations, professions, arts and other skills and relationships enters into the motives and strivings of most normal people, and recognition or evidence of having so played a creative part brings one of the keenest and most enduring of life's satisfactions.

In this matter of parenthood, too, we must not fail to view both sides of the slate. Children are not always nor inevitably a blessing or a reward. There is no denying that as frequently they become a disruptive influence in marriage. When the personal relationship, which we hold to be the essential quality of real marriage, has not been achieved, when there is temperamental or sexual or other disharmony, when spiritual marriage has failed, children frequently become the most conspicuous bone of contention. In an inharmonious, clashing marriage the taxing demands of bringing up children furnish the

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most ready occasions for disagreements and squabbles. There are so many things to irritate and to disagree about that the children easily become the storm center of the warring home.

If the parents on their own account need a harmonious home for the rearing of children, for the child it is certainly the fundamental requirement. Let there be no mistake about this fact: that the home environment of the child will influence his development far more than all the consciously directed efforts at education and training. Character is caught much more than it is taught. The tone and atmosphere of the home, and the kind and quality of the human relationships in the family are by far the strongest determining influences that are brought to bear upon the child. Only when these environmental influences are wholesome and inspiring can we expect really constructive results from directed educational processes. The home environment is after all the most educative of all influences—for good or ill. Whatever the inherited capacities of children may be, in the maladjusted, contentious home they are destined to become misshapen in spirit in their unfolding and development. Such homes are one of the



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chief sources of social misfits. The atmosphere of a home that is pervaded by the spirit of a harmonious, happy marriage relationship is without exception the most favorable environment for the normal and best development of the personality and powers of the child.

The requirement of second importance for success in the job of parenthood is a sound understanding of child nature and development and of what parenthood demands. Parents need to be conscious of the fact that it is the most complex of all tasks that fall to the lot of parents or indeed anybody, for a human being is the most complex thing in the world. Precise knowledge is needed of the order and process of development of the individual from birth to maturity, and of the regime and means by which the plastic inborn impulses and capacities may be built into constructive reaction and behavior patterns, and how the child's best powers may be released and developed. To secure that knowledge requires earnest study and application which no prospective parent can afford to postpone to the time of marriage or until children arrive. The first three years of the child's life are the most determinative. Within that

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short span he may become conditioned toward a self-reliant, self-governing and socially adjusted personality, or toward a selfish, ill-governed individual who is destined to friction in society, if no more, and who brings disappointment or grief to the parents.

The disadvantages of the one-child family are now so well understood that we need not dwell upon the subject at length. The disadvantages arise mainly out of two tendencies. The first is the tendency on the part of parents to lavish affection, attention and indulgence excessively upon the child with the result that he becomes self-centered, self-indulgent and lacking in self-reliance. The second tendency is for the child to remain retarded or permanently deficient in his powers of social adjustment. From the point of view of the child's social development, a well-ordered, harmonious home in which there are three or more children, is the most normal environment. In such a family there is the constant opportunity and necessity for the child to adjust his egoistic impulses and desires to the social group. He learns the advantages and acquires the habit of social adjustment.

From this point of view the too wide spacing of children is a distinct disadvantage. For the most fa-

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avorable interaction of children it is desirable that the child have among his brothers and sisters companions that are not more than two or three years older or younger. Increasingly parents are planning the arrival of children in recognition of this fact.

The matter of having children in the home is complicated by the comparatively widespread problem of sterility, that is, the inability to secure conception. Dr. Dickinson states that involuntary sterility was one of the most frequent conditions for which patients came to him. Of the 1,098 cases studied by him, 252—nearly one in four—were unable to conceive for varying periods of time; 216 cases were sterile for more than three years. The causes of sterility are about equally divided between husbands and wives. This fact needs to be noted for the reason that it is commonly assumed that the causes of sterility lie generally in the wife.

There is a certain proportion of unfortunate cases in which the cause of sterility is permanent. In many cases, however, the cause is removable and conception is made possible. It is advisable therefore in all cases where difficulty is experienced to have the cause ascertained if possible by a specialist and curative

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measures applied. For example, in women sterility is frequently caused by displacements or flexions of the reproductive organs, in which cases advice by the physician may suffice to permit conception to occur, and in which the resulting pregnancy may permanently correct the condition. In order to make certain of the cause, both husband and wife need to be examined. Not infrequently remediable causes of sterility are found in both.

In those cases in which the causes of sterility are not remediable, there fortunately always remains the possibility of great compensation through the adoption of children, a measure that is to be highly recommended under adequate safeguards. Many a marital companionship has become vitalized and enriched by expanding the affection of the pair to embrace an adopted child or children. In so doing they are not only meeting a basic need of their lives and relationship but are rendering a distinct social service.

We have now discussed some of the more important factors that enter into successful marriage. It will be well to gather them up in summary for a final thoughtful scrutiny. The positive factors are:

A normal attitude toward the sex sector of life,

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free from cramping inhibitions, and with an appreciation of sexual powers as a fortunate endowment upon which an ideal marriage may be built.

Knowledge of the anatomy, physiology and hygiene of the reproductive systems of both sexes, of the psychological differences in the sexual constitutions of men and women and the adjustment problems they create.

Intelligent choice of mate to assure the possibility of attaining reasonable harmony of personality-traits, interests, tastes and habits, as a basis for a continually growing companionship in which the partners are essentially in tune.

Knowledge of the conditions for achieving sexual harmony and mutual satisfaction, and the development together of an art of loving adapted to releasing, developing and harmonizing their sexual capacities.

Unselfish, considerate love, mutually, as the essential basis for enduring spiritual marriage.

Children as the major shared interest of the marital partners.

With these conditions—not beyond reach of most intelligent persons—reasonably fulfilled, men and

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women may look toward marriage confident of reaching the high altitudes in the marriage realm, and even of reaching the lofty peaks which give the all-inclusive view, and supreme satisfaction and inspiration. These high spirit-liberating plateaus and peaks are not to be reached by casual wandering on easy levels but by a purposeful scaling of the cliffs that test the real fibre of the human spirit. The rewards to those who attain the high marriage altitudes is incomparable. Only so can man and woman attain the goal of love which is youth's normal expectation, and the natural longing of us all.



## POSTSCRIPT

UNTIL much more is known about human sexuality and marital sex experience, any book on this aspect of marriage must be somewhat experimental. With a view to a re-writing of this book after a time, in the light of experience with it, the author earnestly solicits the coöperation of his readers. He urges them to write him their frank critical evaluation of the book. How far is it considered sound or unsound in its analysis of the sex problem? In what respects is the book found helpful, and in what respects disappointing? What matters are omitted upon which information is desired? What problem have you upon which the book gives no adequate enlightenment? What constructive suggestions for improving the book?

The author, being human, will welcome praise, of course, but he will value most, constructive critical comment and suggestion. Through such coöperation readers can make a valuable contribution to a better understanding of these complex and obscure problems



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of life, to the end that the proportion of marriages which fulfill the normal expectations of those who marry may be steadily increased. Both the unmarried and the married are requested to write the author, in care of the publisher.

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